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PLANT CHOICE
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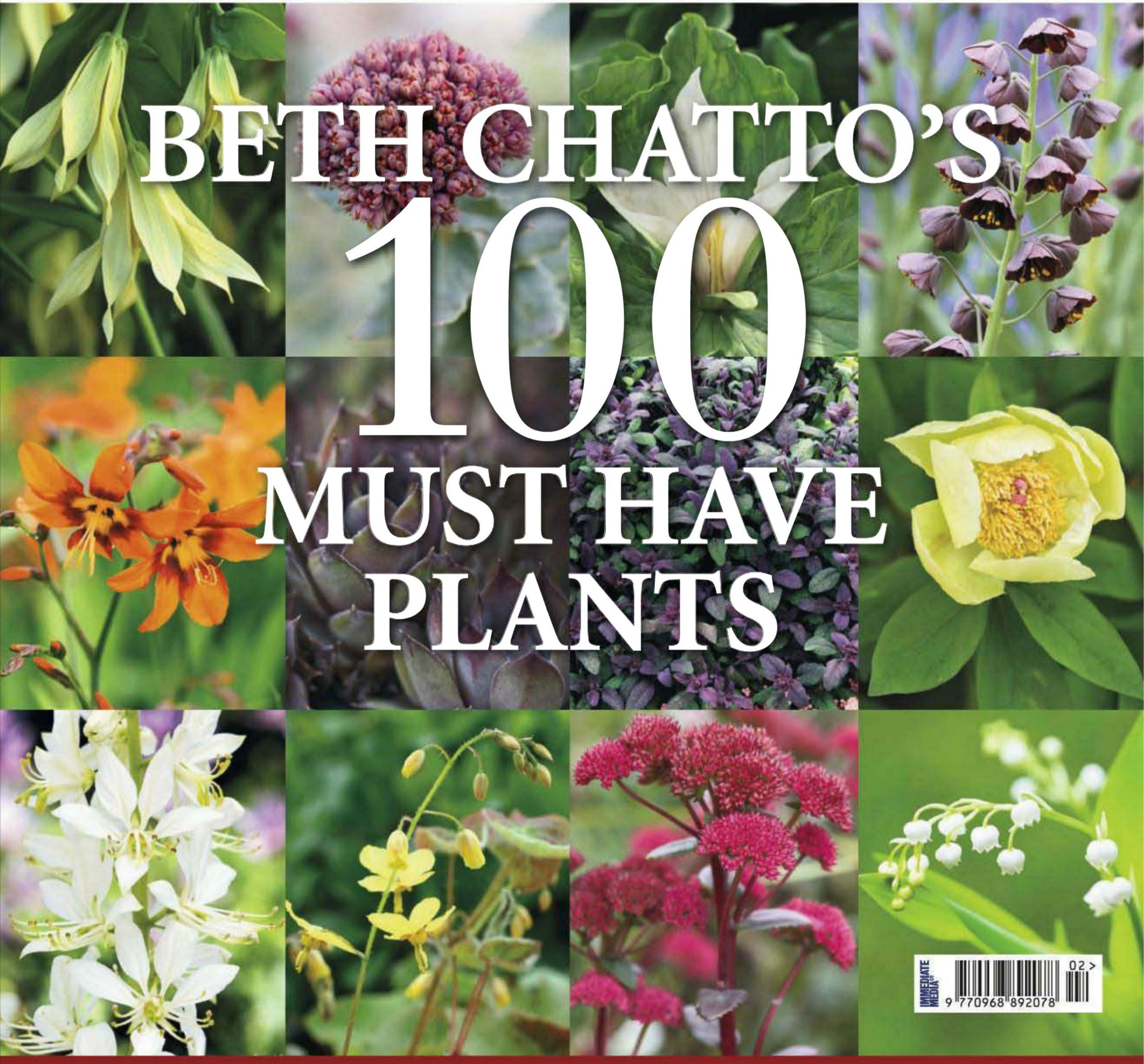

BETH CHATTO'S 100 MUST HAVE PLANTS

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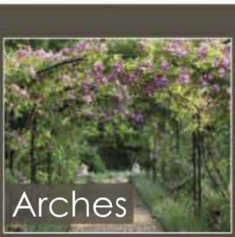

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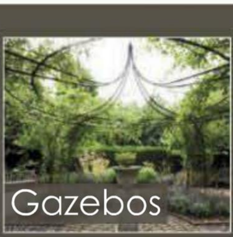

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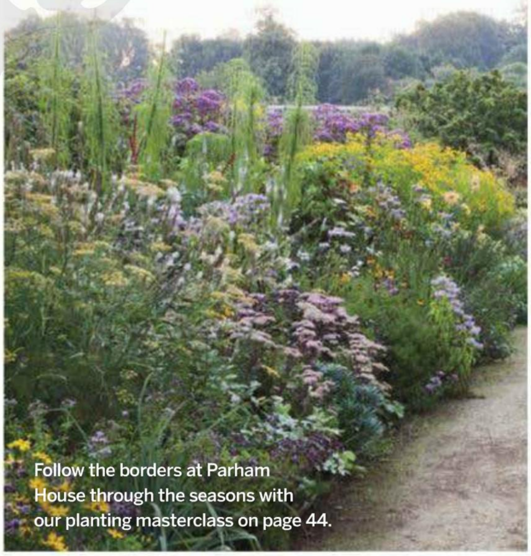
editor's letter

I've been excited about this month's feature on 100 must-have plants since I contacted Beth Chatto early last year. Beth's plant knowledge is pretty much second to none and she's also one of my great gardening heroines, so I was thrilled when she agreed to write this for us. I've no doubt that narrowing down the selection was a difficult task for her, and it makes fascinating reading (see page 33). The big question now is who to ask for next year's feature. I've got a few people in mind, but I'd love to hear whose list you'd enjoy reading, so please email or write to me with your ideas (contact details on page 10). Getting your garden to look good throughout the seasons is one of gardening's greatest challenges. The choice of individual plants is important, but the really fascinating bit is learning how to make beautiful combinations that work hard as the year progresses. The borders at Parham House in West Sussex (page 44) are a fine example of successional planting and we are fortunate that photographer Abby Rex returned numerous times to capture their beauty from spring to autumn. Finally, the February issue wouldn't be complete without a look at snowdrops, and we visit a fine collection of rarities in Ireland on page 68. I hope you enjoy the issue,

Juliet

Beth Chatto's list of must-have plants, from page 33, includes *Sedum* 'Red Cauli'.



Follow the borders at Parham House through the seasons with our planting masterclass on page 44.

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RACHEL WARNE, ABIGAIL REX

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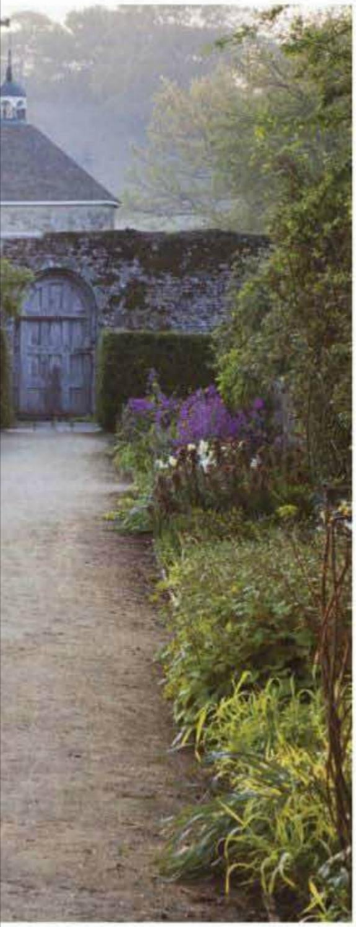

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- Join our reader day at Gravetye Manor to learn the art of naturalistic planting – see page 19
- Your chance to win a Cornish garden break – plus a discount on this year's *Yellow Book* and more. Turn to page 104

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Contributors

PAUL DEBOIS

"It was both a pleasure and a pain to select 100 favourite plants, so many had to be left out."

BETH CHATTO

One of Britain's leading gardeners pioneered her 'right plant, right place' philosophy at her garden in Essex, and is the author of several books about gardening. She names her *100 Must-Have Garden Plants* on page 33.

"This must be one of the most beautiful gardens that exists. Its atmosphere is captivating."

ABIGAIL REX

A self-taught photographer based in West Sussex, Abby's work has been published in several magazines, including *Country Living* and *Homes & Gardens*. Her photographs of the gardens at Parham House appear in our masterclass on planting borders (page 44).

LYNN KEDDIE

"Gable House comes to life early in the year with a carpet of spring bulbs under choice trees."

VAL BOURNE

A garden writer, photographer and lecturer based in the Cotswolds, Val is the author of *Colour in the Garden* (Merrell, 2011) and a regular contributor to *The Telegraph*. She admires the bright spring bulbs at Gable House in Suffolk on page 52.

"Angela's mission to rescue lost Irish snowdrops from gardens is inspirational."

ANDREA JONES

Based in rural South Ayrshire, Andrea travels the world photographing gardens for magazines, newspapers and books, of which the latest is her own, *Garden Source* (eightbooks, 2011). Her pictures of Angela Jupe's snowdrops appear on page 68.

Have you heard...

"I've just received my garden table and chairs. They are gorgeous and I love them!"

Susan, Poole - August 2011

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letters

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star letter

Unearthing history

Reader Tim Woodall got a nasty surprise when digging in his garden.

I am recently retired and can't get used to the idea of sitting still. I promised my wife I would put her first and my hobbies second when I retired but, tired of my whinging, my wife (thankfully) sent me to our shed with an order to find a spade and dig over the flower beds before the frosts froze the ground solid until spring. I eagerly did as I was told. The ground was amenable enough for me to turn over the soil, but then my spade hit what I thought was a large flint. On closer inspection I could see it was a large piece of metal that looked rather like a model of a zeppelin. Suddenly (and eerily) our dog started howling. He was most distressed. Then it dawned on me that my model airship was in fact a mortar bomb, probably from the Second World War.

Tentatively, I stepped away from the flowerbed and went inside the house. I told my wife to stay in the front half of the house. Then I telephoned the police. With the bomb squad on their way I went to find my wife who had placed a bucket over the bomb and was holding it down firmly with the mop. Calmly, I put my hands on her shoulders and led her back into the house, saying nothing. Two hours, ten official-looking people and a small controlled explosion then passed in front of our bewildered eyes before life returned to normal. I have never before been so keen to sit down and watch a French film.

So, if you are a bored but keen gardener like me, think twice before digging over your flower beds – you might get more than you bargained for.

Tim Woodall, Sewards End, Essex.

TALKING POINT

Noël Kingsbury argues that gardeners should not worry about using glyphosate

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Toxic reaction

One of the plants featured in *Nurseryman's favourites* for November last year (issue 179, page 20) was *Rhus typhina*, which is indeed stunning in autumn (see picture, below). However, I thought it worth mentioning that it is also hugely toxic to many people, even if they just briefly touch the leaves.

Rhus typhina

Kay Heath, New South Wales, Australia.

BOTANICAL ADVISER DR JAMES COMPTON REPLIES:

I have handled staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*) many times and found the sap sticky but not irritable or toxic. On the other hand this species is related to poison sumac (*Rhus toxicodendron*) and the creeping poison ivy (*R. radicans*), and some people may be unusually sensitive to all these plants, including *Rhus typhina*.

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Reader recommends

Gardens on the web

Your November issue featured a roof garden designed by two stimulating young landscape architects, Arnaud Maurières and Eric Ossart (issue 179, page 34). After reading the feature I surfed off to North Africa via their website (www.maurieres-ossart.com) to look at more of their work. The videos on the site delighted me for an hour or so.

Suzanne Edney, Apex, North Carolina, USA.

We reserve the right to edit correspondence. ☐

RACHEL WARNE, DAVID NOTON PHOTOGRAPHY/ALAMY; CHRIS HINES/WILD PLACES PHOTOGRAPHY/ALAMY

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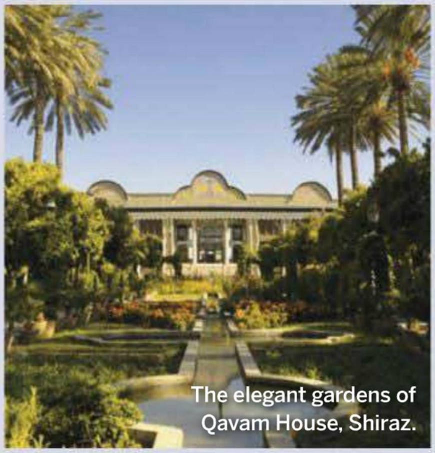
The elegant gardens of Qavam House, Shiraz.

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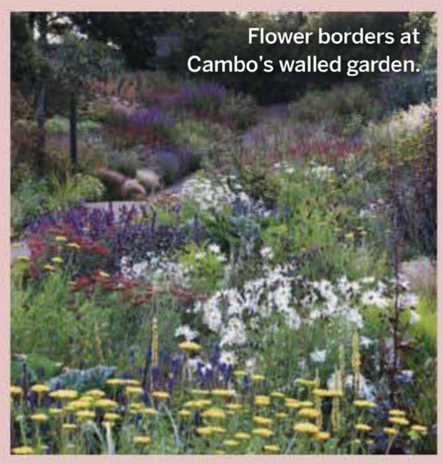
TOUR LEADER **John Brookes MBE**
John is an influential garden designer who ran a school of garden design in Tehran in the late 1970s. His book *Gardens of Paradise* explores the garden as part of Islamic culture.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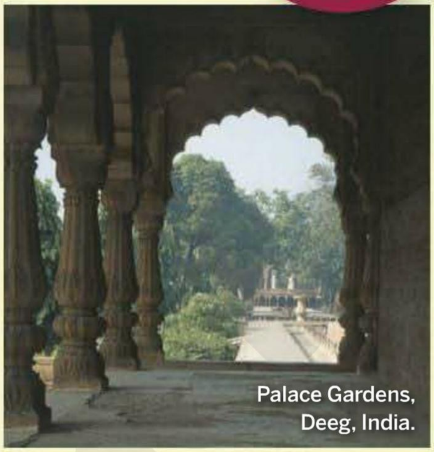
TOUR LEADER **Dr Noël Kingsbury**
Noël is a lecturer and planting designer, and is known internationally as a writer on plants and gardens. His work appears regularly in GARDENS ILLUSTRATED.


Palace Gardens, Deeg, India.

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TOUR LEADER **John Brookes MBE**
In a career spanning 50 years, John has designed more than 1,000 gardens and won four gold medals at Chelsea. His international travels have influenced his designs.

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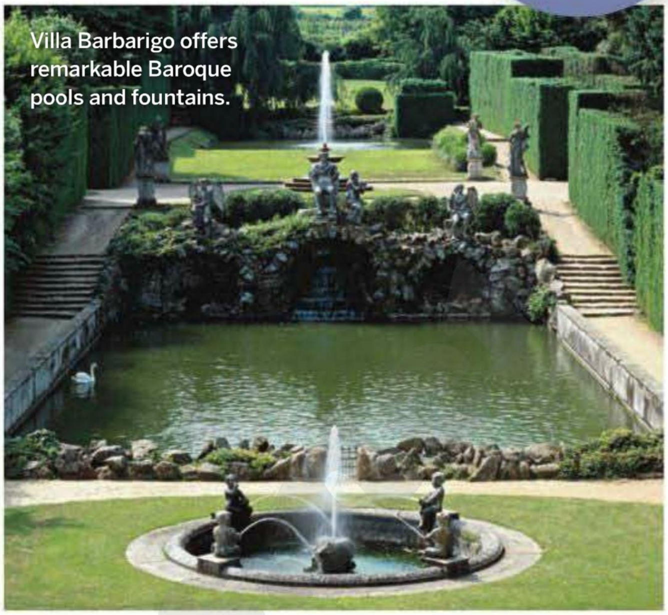
TOUR LEADER **David Wheeler**

David has a lifelong interest in plants, gardens and garden-making. He is editor of *Hortus* and *The Penguin Book of Garden Writing*. He regularly contributes to GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, *Country Life* and a range of UK and US publications. He gardens eight acres at Bryan's Ground on the Welsh borders.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From here we visit a number of fascinating villas and gardens, among them **Isola del Garda**, a beautiful island garden where you are invited to lunch on the terrace overlooking the lake. At **Villa Barbarigo** you will explore the garden's complex layout, discovering a maze, rabbit island and hidden water tricks. In Padua we will visit the oldest botanic garden in the world and at **Villa Rizzardi Pojega** you'll see one of Italy's finest green theatres.

TOUR LEADER **Helena Attlee**

An author specialising in gardens, Helena's books include *Italian Gardens: A Cultural History* (Frances Lincoln, 2006). She also gives lectures and contributes articles to numerous magazines, including GARDENS ILLUSTRATED.

BOOKING DETAILS

These tours have been arranged exclusively for readers of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED by Boxwood Tours, Quality Garden Holidays, a specialist garden tour company set up in 1990, directed by Sue & Brian Macdonald, Kew-trained, professional gardeners.

For further information about these trips, day-to-day activities, hotel accommodation, single supplements and details of how to book, please contact Boxwood Tours, Quality Garden Holidays, Rhiw, Llanbedr, Gwynedd LL45 2NT, UK.

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PICTURES (FROM LEFT): JOHN GLOVER / ALAMY; ALAMY; ALEX RAMSAY / ALAMY; ALAMY.

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③

①

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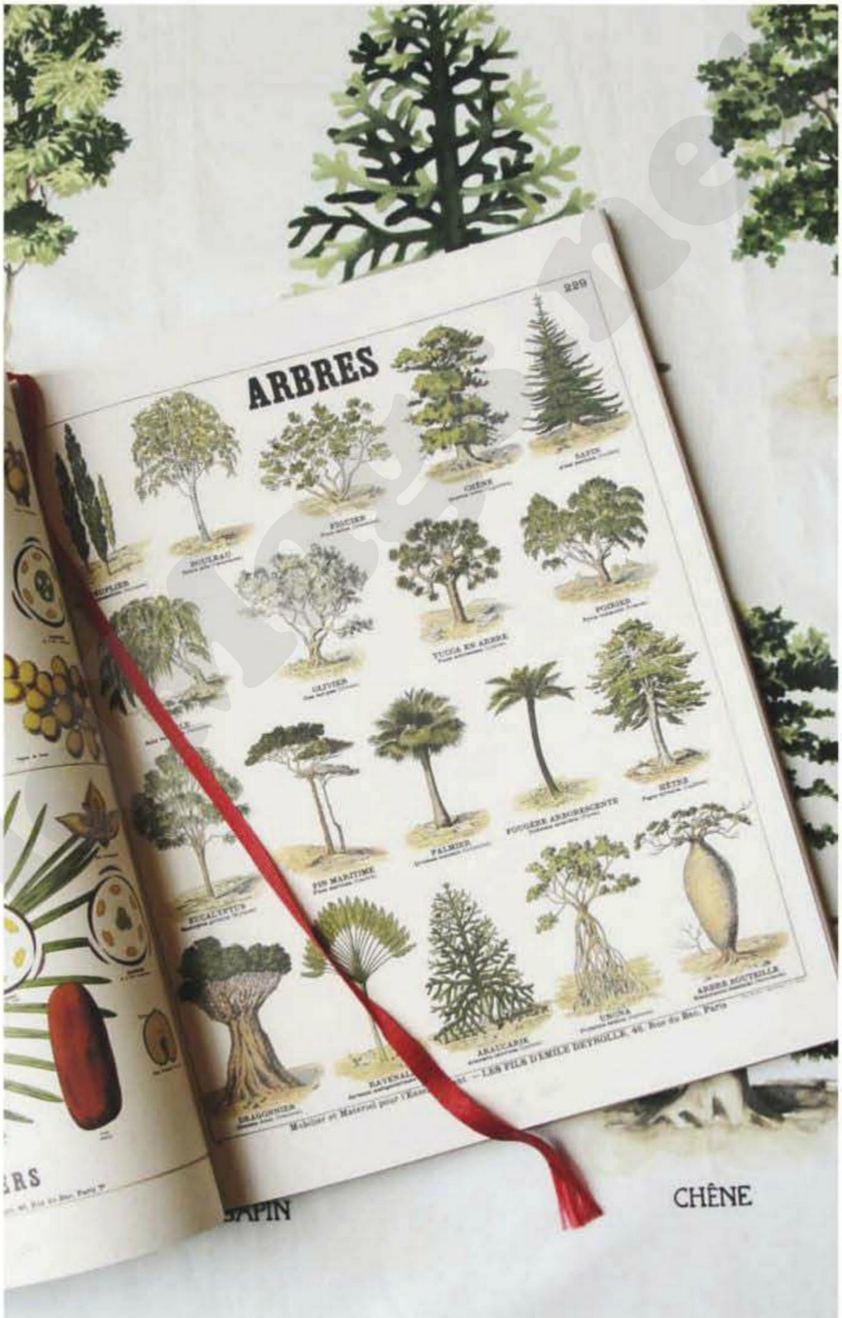
Garden news, Nurseryman's favourites, Shopping & Gardener's notes

NEWS COMPILED BY SORREL EVERTON



BOTANICAL ART

CLASSIC PRINTS INSPIRE FABRICS

The House Deyrolle in Paris is a cabinet of curiosities in the truest sense. Established in 1831, the shop has produced natural science education materials for more than 180 years in the form of stuffed animals, wall charts and cases of butterflies and insects. Recently the company has collaborated with design house Pierre Frey to release three botanical charts from the Deyrolle archive as fabrics. 'Arboretum', 'Prairie' and 'Verger' are printed on chintzed cotton (1.4m wide). £158 per metre. For stockists call Pierre Frey on 020 7376 5599, or see www.pierrefrey.com

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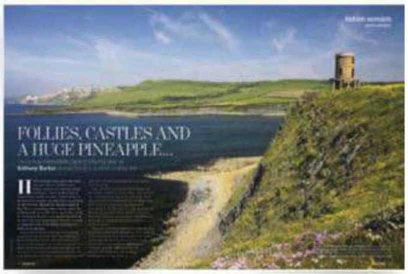
Spring is in the hare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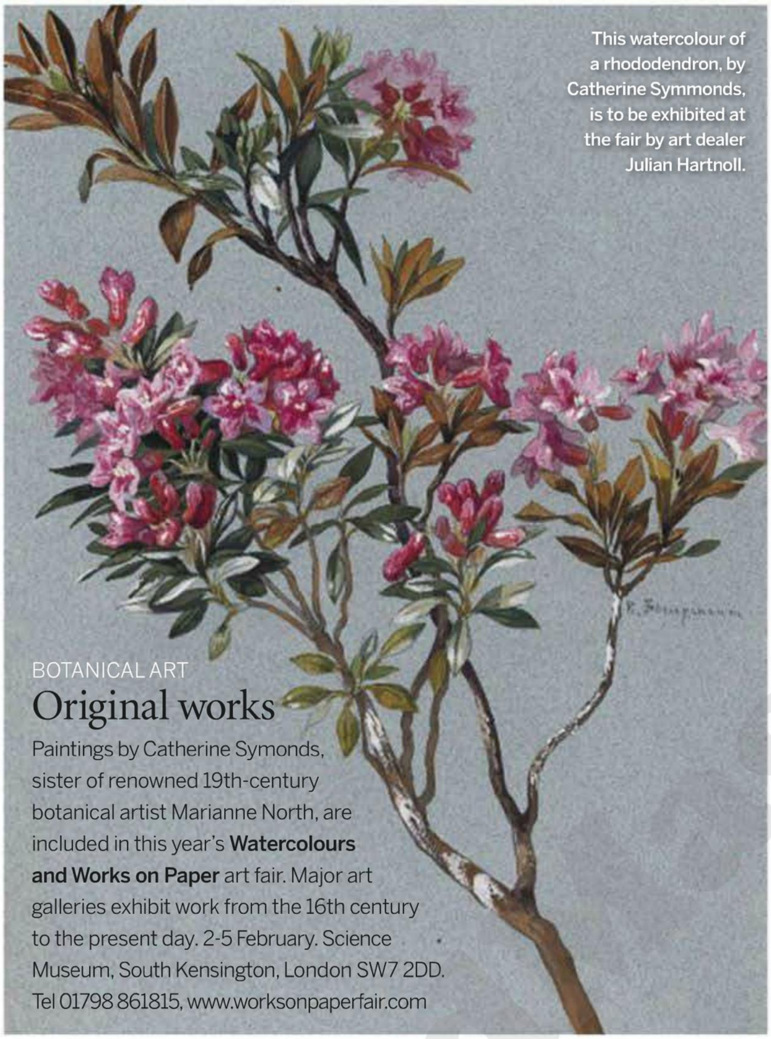

This watercolour of a rhododendron, by Catherine Symmonds, is to be exhibited at the fair by art dealer Julian Hartnoll.

BOTANICAL ART

Original works

Paintings by Catherine Symonds, sister of renowned 19th-century botanical artist Marianne North, are included in this year's **Watercolours and Works on Paper** art fair. Major art galleries exhibit work from the 16th century to the present day. 2-5 February. Science Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 2DD. Tel 01798 861815, www.worksonpaperfair.com

PEATMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL / BERKSWICH PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHILDREN

Grow, bake, eat

Get involved in the latest schools initiative to help children understand where the food they eat comes from. Bake Your Lawn urges schools to grow their own wheat, harvest and mill it, then use the flour to bake bread. Run by the Real Bread Campaign, the campaign is supported by a downloadable guide. If you're a teacher or youth group leader, sign up by April for a free pack of organic wheat seed. Lots more details on www.sustainweb.org/realbread/bake_your_lawn

Helleborus 'Anna's Red'.

Influential gardener Anna Pavord has a new hellebore in her name. Developed by RD Plants, Helleborus *'Anna's Red' has flowers and stems in deep red. Its launch follows the success of* H. *'Penny's Pink' (named after designer Penelope Hobhouse). 'Anna's Red' will be available to buy for the first time at Great Dixter's Winter Open Weekend, 25-26 February. Tel 01797 252878, www.greatdixter.co.uk*

EVENTS

Show your planting skill

Combine your artistic and gardening talent at this year's Malvern Spring Gardening Show (10-13 May). Gardener Chris Beardshaw wants teams to recreate a picture in plants. Ten designs will then appear at the show, with a chance to win £1,000. Full details from Nina Acton on 01684 584919.

PLANTS

Snowdrop gift

Send someone a little snowdrop magic by ordering a bunch from Easton Walled Gardens' new online shop. Famed for its display of snowdrops, the Lincolnshire garden now sells packages of ten bulbs 'in the green'. These can be planted straight out into the garden. £3.95 per bunch, available during February and March. For details call 01476 530063 or see www.shopateaston.co.uk

NOSEY PARKER

We ask inquisitive questions to gardening people

Fiona Crumley

Head gardener, Chiswick House and Gardens Trust, responsible for the gardens of the 18th-century Palladian-inspired villa built by 3rd Earl of Burlington.

What is your earliest gardening memory? Germinating runner-bean seeds on a windowsill by suspending them over a milk bottle full of water. I remember watching the roots develop.
How did you become involved with gardens as a profession? I wanted to be a farmer, but for one reason or another was talked out of it. I knew I wanted to work outdoors.

What is your favourite aspect of your job? Seeing the garden and the plants coming back into good healthy condition following on from the recently completed Heritage Lottery Funded project for Park Regeneration.
A significant amount of work is being done by volunteers. They achieve so much in a session with their 'people power'. Their enthusiasm is inspiring.
Who has inspired your career the most? Valerie Finnis, who, by constantly reminding me to apply to the Merlin Trust for a grant to pursue a travel project, made me realise that as a young horticulturist anything can be possible, and that a career in horticulture can take you anywhere you might fancy going.
Tell us about Chiswick House's camellia festival. It started as a showcase for the newly restored 90m-long conservatory, which dates from 1813 and houses a collection of *Camellia* varieties dating from between 1815 and 1850. The varieties are among the first to be introduced to gardeners and were fantastically expensive at the time.
Do you have an advice on growing camellias? Prune gently, shortly after flowering, to keep a good shape to the plant and maximise flowering.
If you weren't a gardener, what would you be? A beef cattle farmer.
Who would you most like to have dinner with? Robin Lane Fox; I read his column in the *Financial Times* and always laugh.
What is your top gardening tip? Always have a piece of string in your pocket along with your penknife. Then if you don't use if for tying something in, you can always use it to tie memory knots in.
Not a lot of people know this about me... I can dowse for water using coat hangers.

- The Chiswick House Camellia Festival 2012, Chiswick House Gardens, London W4 2RP. 18 February to 18 March 2012. For advance festival bookings, details on the Camellia Lecture Series and general information on visiting, call 020 8742 3905. www.chgt.org.uk

NEW VEGETABLES

Try new vegetable varieties

Look out for Mr Fothergill's new vegetable cultivars in their 2012 seed range. Beetroot Red Hawk F1 and parsnip Duchess F1 have been chosen for their natural disease-tolerance; sweet corn Mirai 160Y F1 and strawberry Delician F1 for their excellent flavour and chilli pepper Gusto Purple FI as one of the more exotic species now on offer. For a catalogue or to order call 0845 371 0518, www.mr-fothergills.co.uk

Diary

Seedy Sunday is Brighton's annual seed-swapping event.

- Orchid growing. **The first in Alitex's annual lecture series with Jim Durrant of McBean's Orchids. 31 January, £10, 10.30am to noon. Torberry Farm, South Harting, Petersfield, Hants GU31 5RG. Tel 01730 826900, www.alitex.co.uk**
- Hellebore Open Days. **Talks, tours and advice with expert breeder Roger Harvey. 3-4 and 24-25 February, 9.30am-4.30pm. Harveys Garden Plants, Great Green, Thurston, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 3SJ. Tel 01359 233363, www.harveysgardenplants.co.uk**
- Seedy Sunday **Swap spare seed and pick up interesting heritage varieties. 5 February, 10am-4.30pm. Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 4AH. www.seedysunday.org**
- Hamamelis open day **Enjoy designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd's collection of witch hazels. 11 February, £8.50, 11am-3pm. Gresgarth Hall Caton, Lancaster LA2 9NB. Tel 020 7931 9995, www.arabellalennoxboyd.com**
- Garden History Society Annual Lecture at the RHS. **RHS president Elizabeth Banks talks on 'The Way Forward: Gardening is Happiness'. 15 February, £18, 6.30pm. RHS Halls, Greycoats St, London SW10 2QD. Tel 020 7608 2409, www.gardenhistorysociety.org (Part of winter lecture series.)**
- Watercolour Painting: Snowdrops. **Learn new techniques. 23 February, £67, 10.30am-4pm. Barnsdale Gardens, The Avenue, Exton, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8AH. Tel 01572 813200, www.barnsdalegardens.co.uk** ☐

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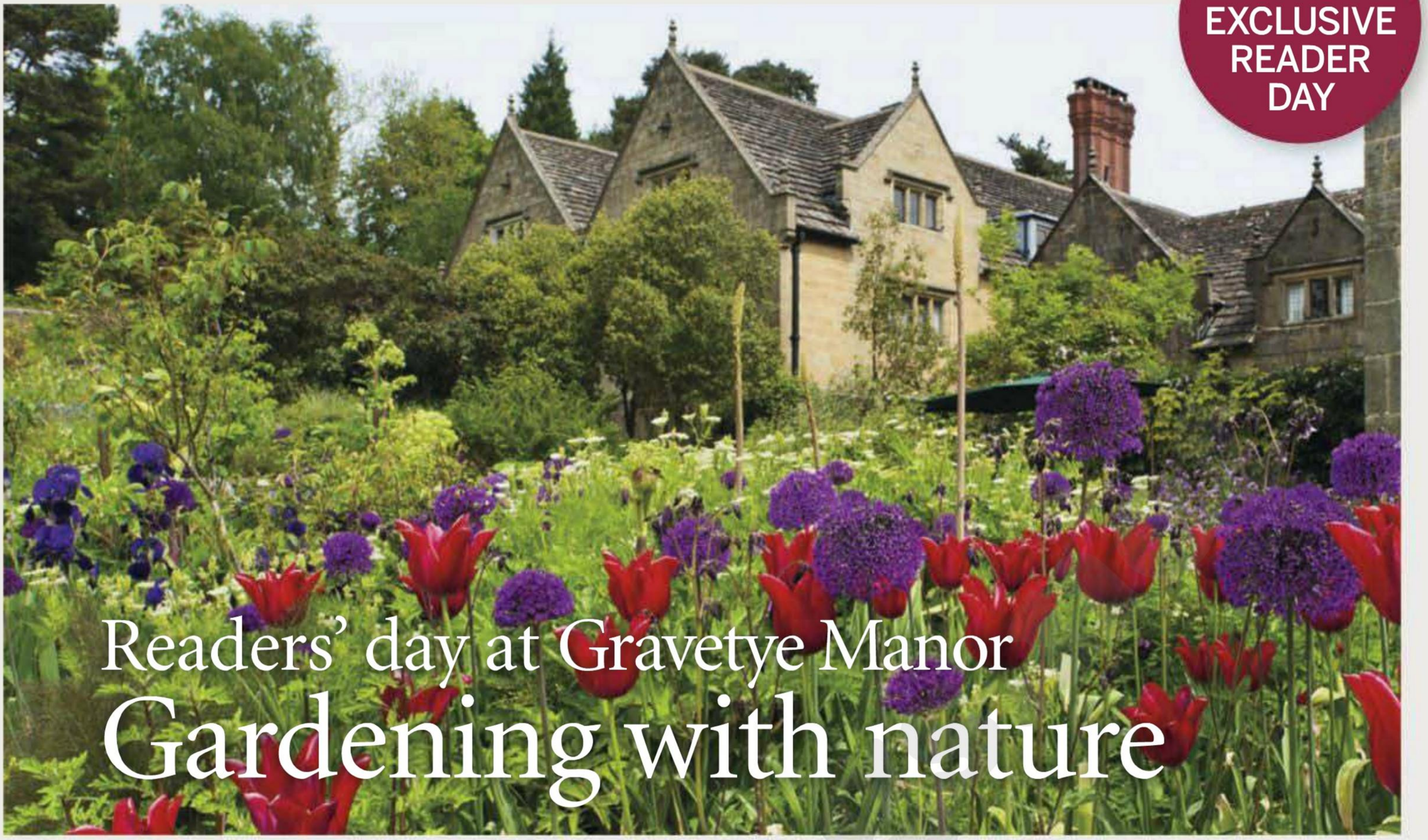

Readers' day at Gravetye Manor

Gardening with nature

Visit the home of pioneering Victorian gardener William Robinson and learn how his naturalistic style of planting changed the way we garden

Gravetye Manor is tucked deep in the Sussex countryside, a 16th-century manor house complete with terraced lawn, exuberant borders, a meadow and unusual, oval-shaped walled garden. Run now as an exclusive country house hotel, Gravetye's most notable past owner was William Robinson. Already an established garden writer, it was here at Gravetye that Robinson put into practice his ideas for the English natural garden. When he published his book *The Wild Garden* (1870), he was something of a maverick, encouraging naturalised plantings of both British natives and exotic plants to garden enthusiasts more familiar with the fashion for regimented bedding displays.

During your day, head gardener Tom Coward and planting expert Noël Kingsbury will talk about William Robinson and his gardening legacy. You'll then enjoy a champagne reception and a delicious three-course lunch from the hotel's award-winning kitchen, followed by a guided tour of the gardens in the afternoon, finishing on the terrace for tea.

THE SPEAKERS

NOËL KINGSBURY is a lecturer and planting designer who is known internationally as a writer on plants and gardens, focusing on the ecological and naturalistic.

TOM COWARD worked at Great Dixter before becoming Gravetye's head gardener. His focus is to conserve Robinson's work while progressing the garden in a continued spirit of experimentation.

Tickets cost £150

To book call

0844 815 5853*

and quote 'GMANOR12' or go to

www.gardensillustrated.com

Tickets and directions will be sent out prior to the event. Places are limited so booking is essential. Please advise us of any dietary requirements or accessibility queries.

* Calls to this number from a BT landline will cost no more than 5p per minute. Calls from mobiles and other providers may visit. For more details about Gravetye go to www.gravetyemanor.co.uk

DATE

23 April, 2012

HELD AT

Gravetye Manor, Vowels Lane,
West Hoathly, Sussex RH19 4LJ

PROGRAMME

9.45am Arrival and coffee

10am Talk by Noël Kingsbury on William Robinson's approach to gardening

11.30am Head gardener Tom Coward talks about Gravetye past, present and future

12.45pm Lunch with Laurent-Perrier champagne

2.30pm Garden tours

4pm Tea on the terrace

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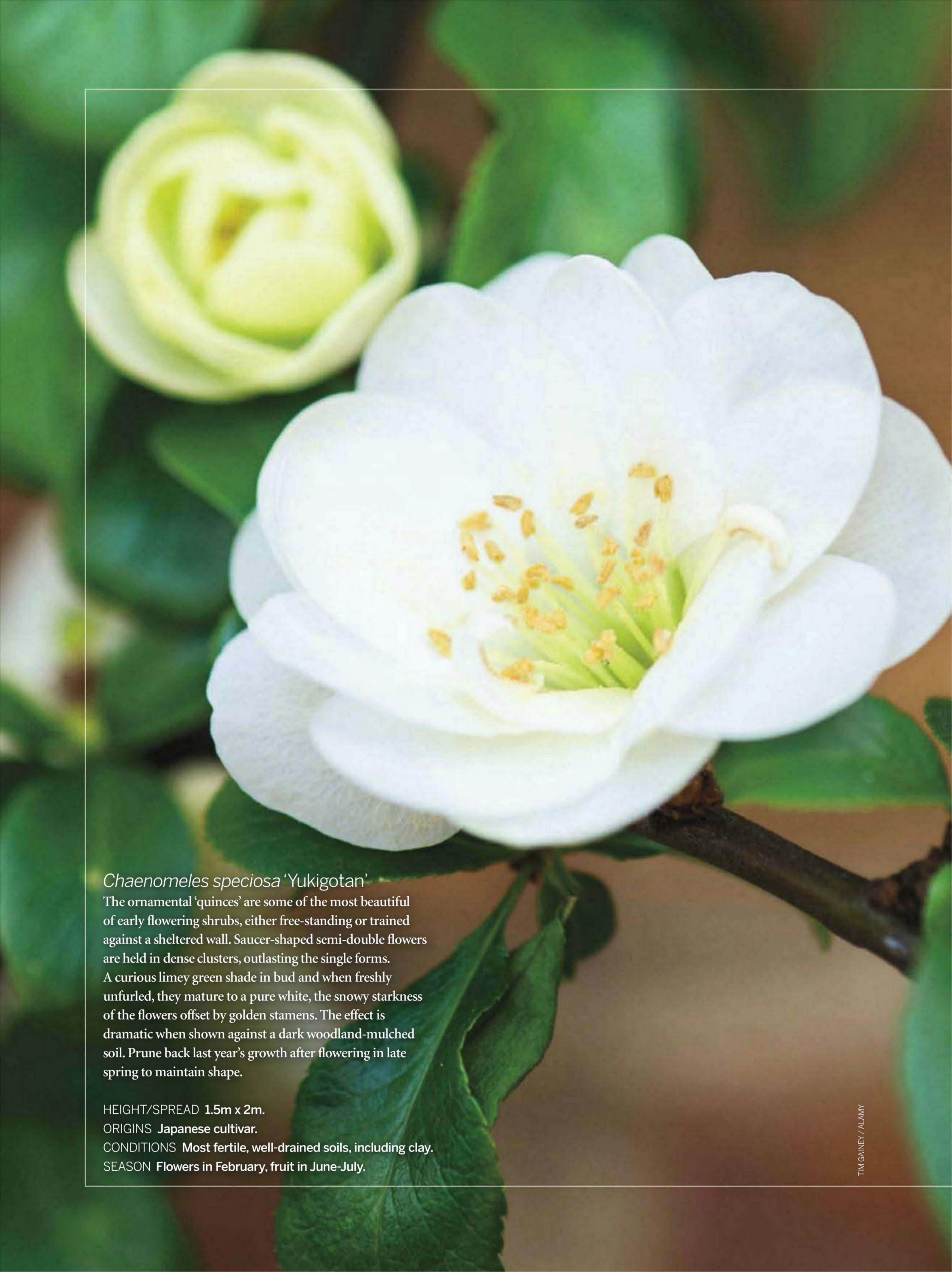
Gravetye Manor is offering Reader Day guests a SPECIAL PRICE ON ACCOMMODATION for stays of 1 or 2 nights prior to, or after the event.
Contact the hotel for full details on 01342 810567 and quote GARDENS ILLUSTRATED



Chaenomeles speciosa 'Yukigotan'

The ornamental 'quinces' are some of the most beautiful of early flowering shrubs, either free-standing or trained against a sheltered wall. Saucer-shaped semi-double flowers are held in dense clusters, outlasting the single forms. A curious limey green shade in bud and when freshly unfurled, they mature to a pure white, the snowy starkness of the flowers offset by golden stamens. The effect is dramatic when shown against a dark woodland-mulched soil. Prune back last year's growth after flowering in late spring to maintain shape.

HEIGHT/SPREAD **1.5m x 2m.**
ORIGINS **Japanese cultivar.**
CONDITIONS **Most fertile, well-drained soils, including clay.**
SEASON **Flowers in February, fruit in June-July.**

TIM GAINEY / ALAMY

February plants

The first precious harbingers of spring unfurl their flowers this month, quickening the pulse with thoughts of the season ahead

WORDS **CHRIS MARCHANT** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

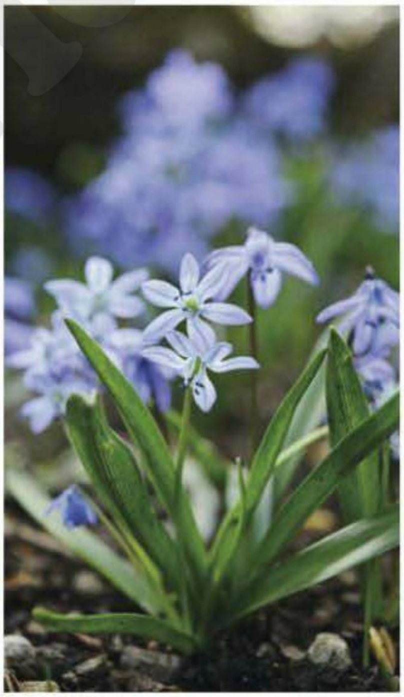
CHARLIE HOPKINSON

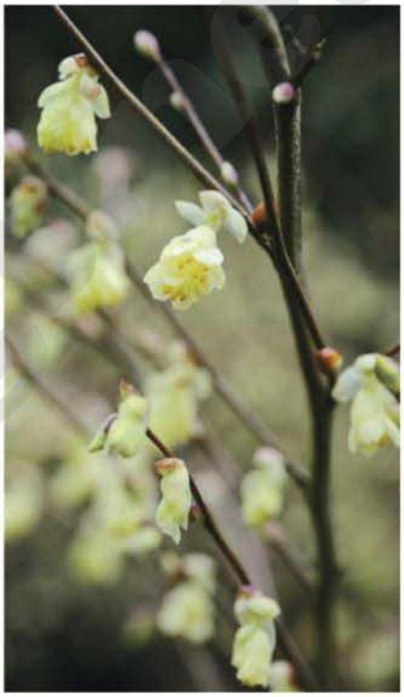
Chris Marchant is co-owner of Orchard Dene Nurseries in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, a wholesale grower specialising in hardy herbaceous plants

Scilla siberica 'Spring Beauty'

Around now, the discomfort and cold of autumn bulb-planting begins to yield up treasures that signal the start of a new season in the garden. The name tells us what we need to know about hardiness. This plant copes with extreme winters, flowering at 2,000m among scrub and rocks from March onwards. In the kinder conditions of lowland Europe, you are rewarded with the down-turned blue-violet flowers a little earlier. Fine recompense for modest work.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 15cm x 15cm.
ORIGINS The species grows wild in southern Russia and southwards to Syria.
CONDITIONS Grows best in sandy, free-draining soil in sun or light shade.
SEASON Flowers February to March.



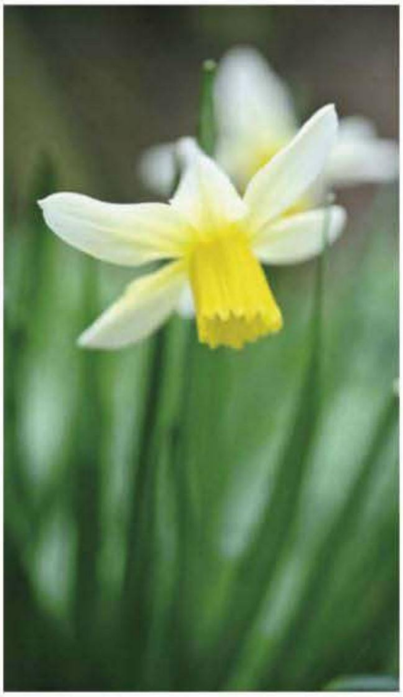


Corylopsis pauciflora

I first noticed this plant in Windsor Great Park, where Eric Savill had set it among hydrangeas to give stoic winter visitors a visual prize. The name suggests a 'shortage' of flowers, but in reality the small clusters of butter-yellow blooms are grouped rather generously along dark, slender stems. Deliciously scented, they cut well and make a delightful airy display for the house – particularly when grouped with brightly coloured willow stems. The appeal continues through delicate hazel-like foliage, margined rosy purple on opening. In autumn the leaves take on warmer tints to give a final glowing salute before falling.

HEIGHT/SPREAD Slowly attains 2m x 2m.
ORIGINS Native of Taiwan and Japan.
CONDITIONS Moist, humus-rich soil.
SEASON Flowers Feb-March; autumn foliage.

WorldMags.net



Narcissus 'Jack Snipe'

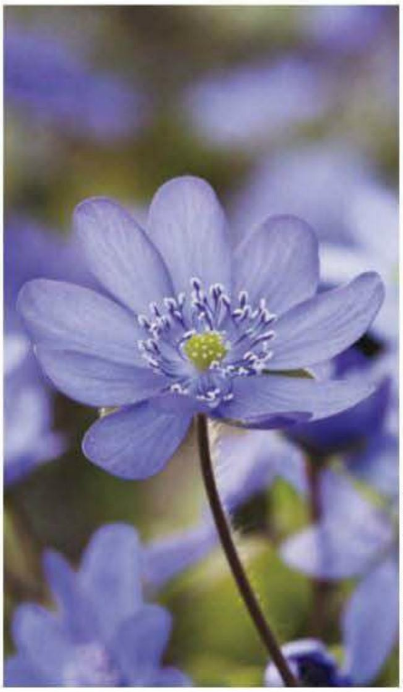
Not a rare thing at all, but nonetheless valuable for that. This diminutive and jaunty plant is a hybrid of *N. cyclamineus*, from which it has inherited the same hardiness. 'Jack Snipe', developed by hybridiser MP Williams in 1951, naturalises beautifully in our garden, on grassy banks at the base of a stand of birches. Slightly reflexed outer petals and longer trumpet give the happy impression that stems are leaning into the breeze and the colour counter-balance is easy on the eye.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 25cm x 10cm.
ORIGINS Hybrid whose parents include native Portuguese species *N. cyclamineus*.
CONDITIONS Moderately fertile, well-drained soil. Application of tomato fertiliser in early spring will increase flowering.
SEASON Late February to March.

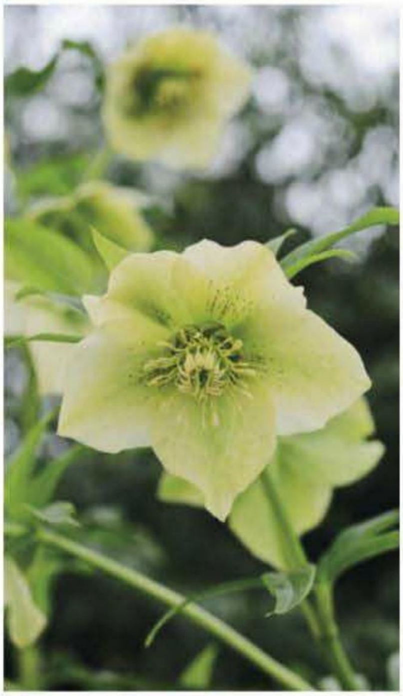
Hepatica transsilvanica

A name derived from the Greek *hepar*, meaning liver. Early herbalists thought the plant held medicinal benefit for ailments of the liver on the basis that its leaves resembled a liver in their three-lobed formation. Medicine has come a long way since then. Now the plant is valued for its ornamental qualities. Moist soil and winter snowfall are the catalyst to a good display. One of the season's early treasures, we have them in a raised stone sink at the threshold from house to garden, where daily encounter ensures we don't miss their moment of radiance.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 15cm x 18cm.
ORIGINS The Carpathian Mountains, Eastern Europe.
CONDITIONS Tolerates a range of soils from sandy to clay, including alkaline soils.
SEASON Flowers Feb-early March.



JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS



Helleborus x *hybridus* 'Yellow Lady'

There are so many beautiful hellebores that I can't choose just one as a favourite, but this deserves a mention. Usually unmarked, the flowers are occasionally speckled burgundy at the base of the nectaries. Upright stems hold the flowers proud of the foliage, giving a perfect opportunity to appreciate their long-lasting display. The colour is especially effective teamed with the purples and blues of a woodland border: I have clumps mixed with *Pulmonaria* 'Blue Ensign' and the glossy spring foliage of giant colchicums.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 45cm x 35cm.
ORIGINS Developed by German breeder Gisela Schmiemann.
CONDITIONS Humus-rich, moisture-retentive soil.
SEASON February to April.

Places to visit

Chris Marchant names some of her favourite gardens and other places to see plants at their best

February offers the perfect opportunity to see some of this country's magnificent parkland plantings at their naked best. Devoid of leaves, the real sculptural beauty of established trees is heightened; undulating contours of the landscape are more evident – even more so with a sharp hoar frost or dusting of snow.

Stately trees at the Blenheim Estate in Oxfordshire.

COURTESY OF BLENHEIM PALACE

One such favourite is **Blenheim Estate**, surrounding the superb baroque architecture of Blenheim Palace. Currently home to the 11th Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, this was the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill whose father Lord Randolph Churchill described the Vanbrugh Bridge and

Ribes laurifolium 'Rosemoor'

This shrub is slow to establish, and you may have to wait a couple of seasons for your first flowers, but patience is a virtue in every good gardener, and you will be rewarded. Where it is trained against a sheltered, sunny wall, the dark green, leathery leaves are protected from icy winds that might otherwise scorch the margins. Red stalks, supporting pendulous bunches of flowers, form exciting dashes of colour across the plant and are a perfect lift to its understated elegance. It generously produces shiny black berries later in the season for a final encore.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 1-2m x 2m.
ORIGINS China.
CONDITIONS Most soils including heavy clay. Sheltered spot.
SEASON Flowers February; berries in spring.

MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY

Stachyurus praecox

As we emerge from the gloomy greys of winter I am drawn to the elegant simplicity of this shrub. Pendulous flowering racemes, like oversized drop earrings, adorn burnished mahogany stems, as yet unclothed by leaves. Spring brings many bright yellow flowers, but these are of softer, creamy hue and marry well with the many emerging greens at this time. Viewed from a distance, the branches gently arch under the sheer weight of their flowery load.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 3m x 4m.
ORIGINS South Hokkaido, Japan.
CONDITIONS Easily grown in moist woodland soil in part shade.
SEASON February to March.

Chionodoxa forbesii 'Alba'

Glory of the snow is native to Western Turkey, where it grows on stony hillsides, flowering as the snow melts. The still, cool days of early spring are a time for stooping low to catch the detailed perfection of smaller flowering bulbs, and there are none more deserving of our attention than these. I have planted them in drifts, nestled between the protective foliage of bolder subjects like *Cyclamen* and small-leaved bergenias. They are best grown through a coarse, dry, gritty mulch to stop rain-splash spoiling their perfect white attire.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 15cm x 15cm.
ORIGINS Western Turkey.
CONDITIONS Stony, free-draining soil.
SEASON February to March. □

imposing rides up to the Column of Victory as 'the finest view in England'. It would be a brave man who argued against such claims and continuing investment ensures standards are not slipping. Water Terraces, Rose Gardens and Formal Garden all re-open mid February after winter closure. See website for details of opening times and special events. Woodstock, Oxfordshire OX20 1PP. Tel 01993 810 530, www.blenheimpalace.com

For a totally different winter scene, **Valley Gardens** in Windsor Great Park, laid out by Eric Savill, demonstrates in confident fashion the colour and textural range of ericaceous (calcifuge) woodland landscape on a grand scale. There are plenty of trails and pathways to explore through the 250 acres. Entrance is free throughout the year (with a charge for parking) and there's a good shop and restaurant to complete the day. Englefield Green, Egham TW20 0VU. Tel 01753 860222, www.theroyallandscape.co.uk

The woodland landscape of Valley Gardens.

ANDREW SMITH

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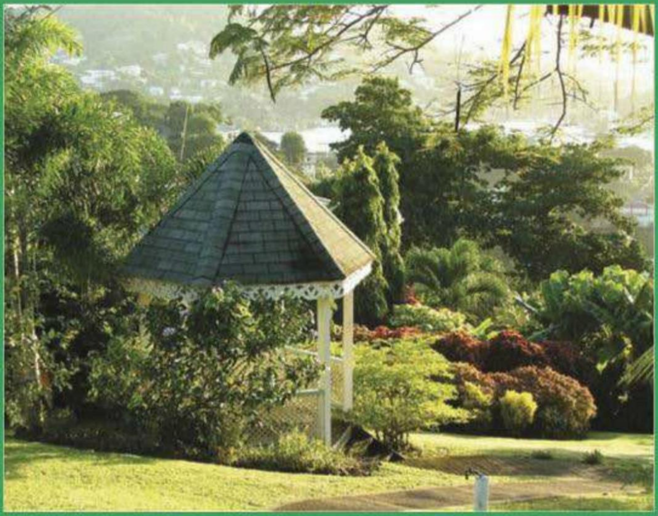

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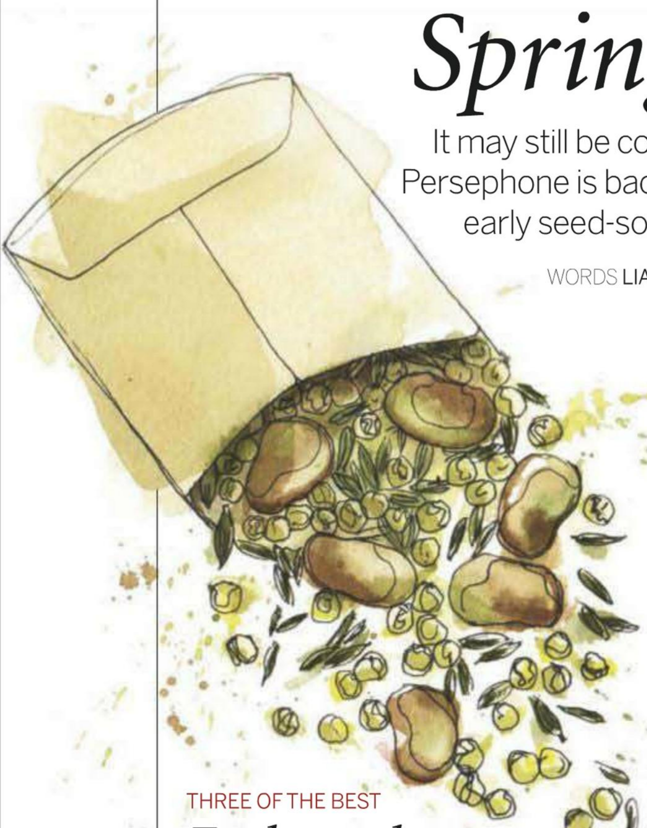
Spring into action

It may still be cold, but warmer weather is on the way. Persephone is back. This is a time of hope and action, and early seed-sowing is the perfect way to celebrate

WORDS **LIA LEENDERTZ** ILLUSTRATION **GEORGINA LUCK**



THREE OF THE BEST

Early seeds

Try these under glass or in cold frames:

PEAS

Choose an early type for hardiness such as 'Feltham First' or 'Early Onward'. Sow into a length of compost-filled guttering and hang the guttering from the greenhouse roof to fox mice.

BROAD BEANS

Those sown under cover now may even overtake those sown outside last autumn. Sow hardy 'Super Aquadulce' into modules or pots.

LETTUCES

Sow into little modules to be planted out later. Use cold-hardy winter varieties such as 'Reine des Glaces' and 'Winter Marvel'.

THINGS TO DO

If you haven't got much time, just do these essential tasks...

Use horticultural fleece to cover peach, apricot and almond blossom when frosts are forecast.

Hold off direct sowing and spread plastic sheets over veg beds to help the sun warm them. You will get better, more even germination when you do sow.

Scatter a high-potash fertiliser around the base of fruit trees to encourage flowers and fruit.

PRACTICAL JOB

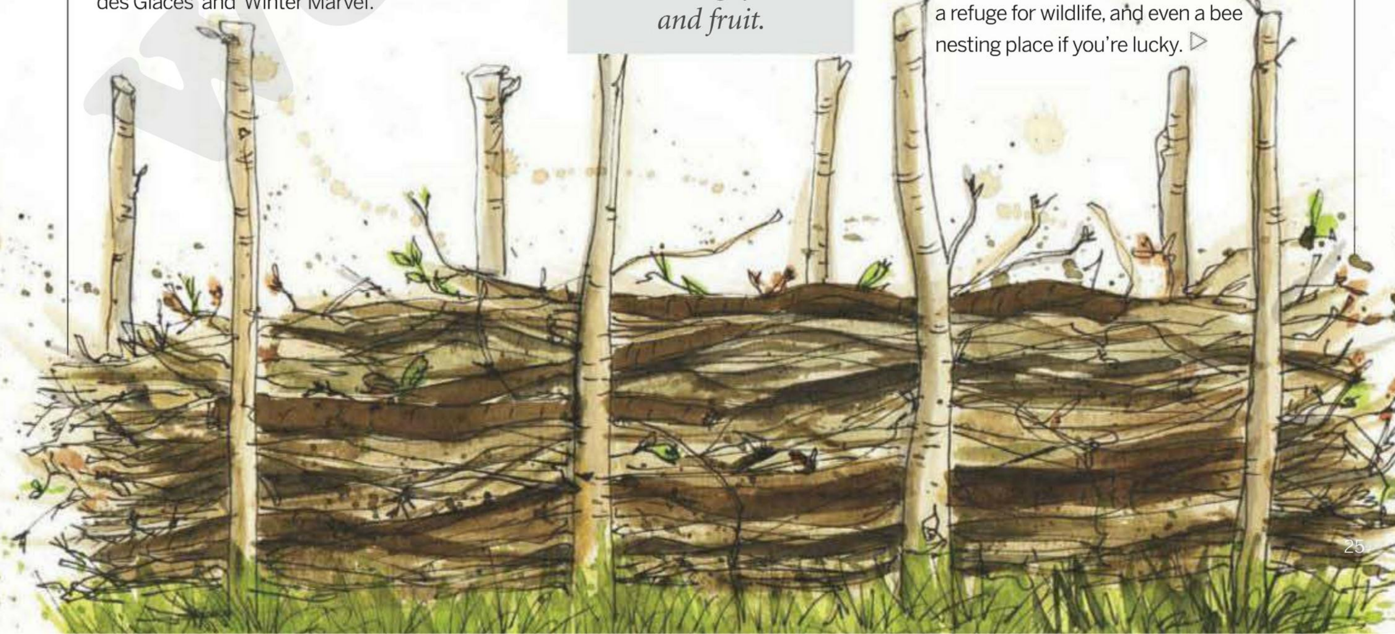
Prune and plant raspberries

Autumn-fruiting raspberries bear fruit on new growth, so chop all stems down to the ground now. Summer fruiters fruit on year-old growth, so leave them alone or be raspberry-less all summer. This is also a great time to plant bare-root raspberries such as summer-fruiting 'Glen Prosen' and an old favourite such as 'Autumn Bliss' for raspberries from July until the first frosts. From Blackmoor, tel 01420 477978, www.blackmoor.co.uk.

PRACTICAL JOB

Make a 'dead hedge'

A 'dead hedge' is an environmentally friendly and good looking way to deal with woody winter prunings that can't be composted. Just hammer two rows of hazel or chestnut rods into the ground, the rows about 50cm apart, and lay your prunings along the inside. Bands of differently coloured and textured materials gradually build up. Stems do rot down, but slowly, so this doubles as a refuge for wildlife, and even a bee nesting place if you're lucky. ▷



worldmags.net

READ THIS

Design inspiration

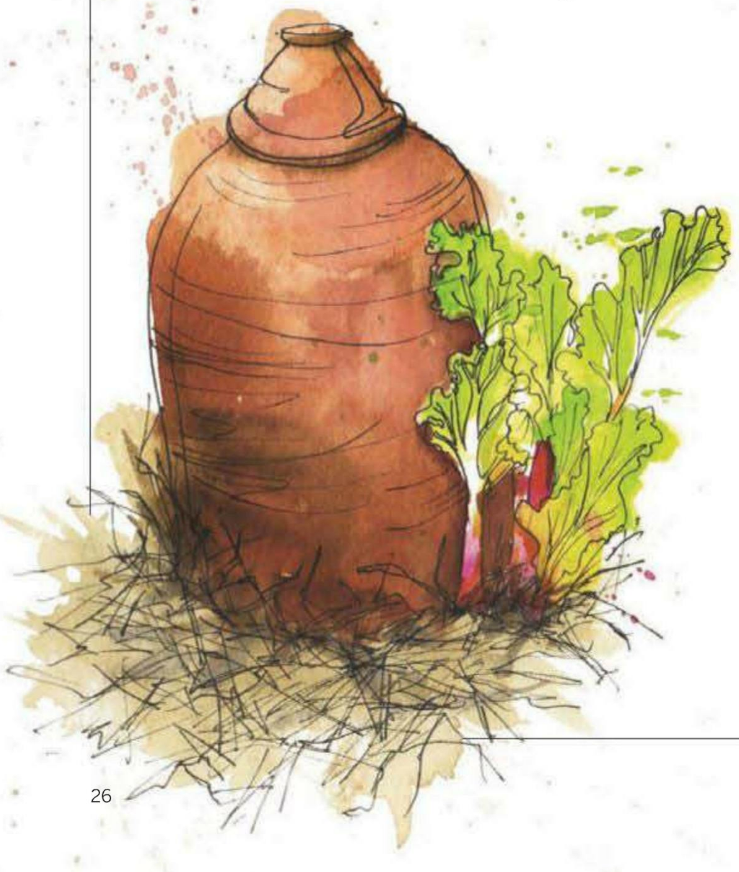
▷Garden designer Arne Maynard's website **www.arnemaynard.com** is a gentle glimpse into his thoughtful way of working, and includes a journal detailing the run-up to his first Chelsea garden this May (follow his progress on twitter: @arnemaynard). The website also contains details of his courses, run from his Grade II listed, late medieval farmhouse Allt-y-bela in Monmouthshire. The first of the year – 'A kitchen garden in depth' – runs next month.

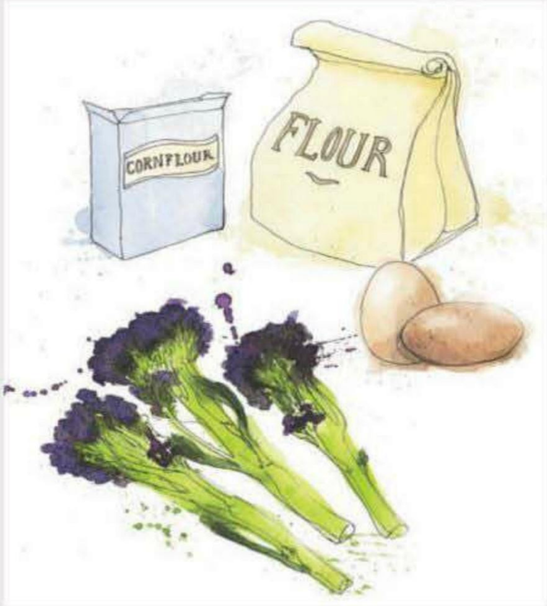
Arne
Maynard
Garden
Design

PRACTICAL JOB

Cover rhubarb

Already the first thing to pop up in the garden, this is the moment to cover rhubarb in order to force an extra-early, extra-tender crop. The darkness makes the stems stretch up, searching for light. The pretty way to do it is to buy a terracotta forcer, but a bucket or even upturned bin will work just as well, especially if you pack straw around the outside for insulation. Harvest about eight weeks later.





ONE TO MAKE

Tempura of purple sprouting broccoli

There is so little to harvest now that purple-sprouting broccoli takes on an elevated status. Treat it with the reverence it deserves by encasing it in a light, crispy tempura batter in my version of this classic Japanese dish, best served as a starter.

INGREDIENTS – serves four

About 20 spears of purple sprouting broccoli
1 litre groundnut oil or vegetable oil

FOR THE BATTER

2 egg yolks
350ml ice-cold sparkling water
1 tsp cornflour
200g self-raising flour

FOR THE DIPPING SAUCE

3 tbsp fish sauce
3 tbsp lime juice
3tbsp water
1 to 2 tbsp sugar
Garlic clove, minced
Finely chopped flesh of half a chilli

METHOD

Mix the dipping sauce ingredients together, then set aside. Stir egg yolks into the iced water. Sieve together the flour and cornflour, then, using a whisk, gently stir into the water. Be sure to leave plenty of lumps in the mixture – these make delicious crunchy batter. Add the oil to a wok and heat until a breadcrumb sizzles when dropped in. Dip the broccoli spears into the batter and place them straight into the hot oil. After 1-2 minutes, or once the batter has turned a pale gold, lift them out with a slatted spoon and drain on kitchen paper. Serve immediately with a bowl of dipping sauce. ☐

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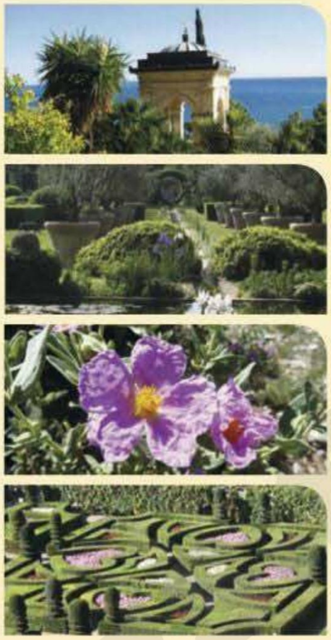

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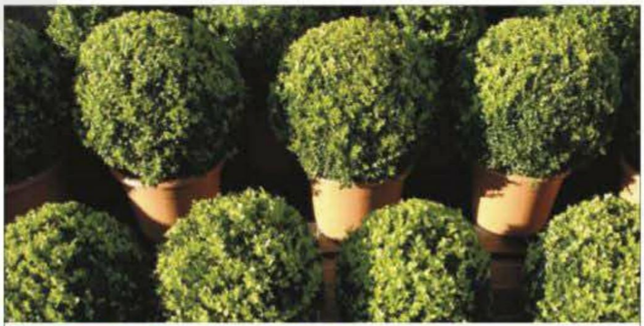

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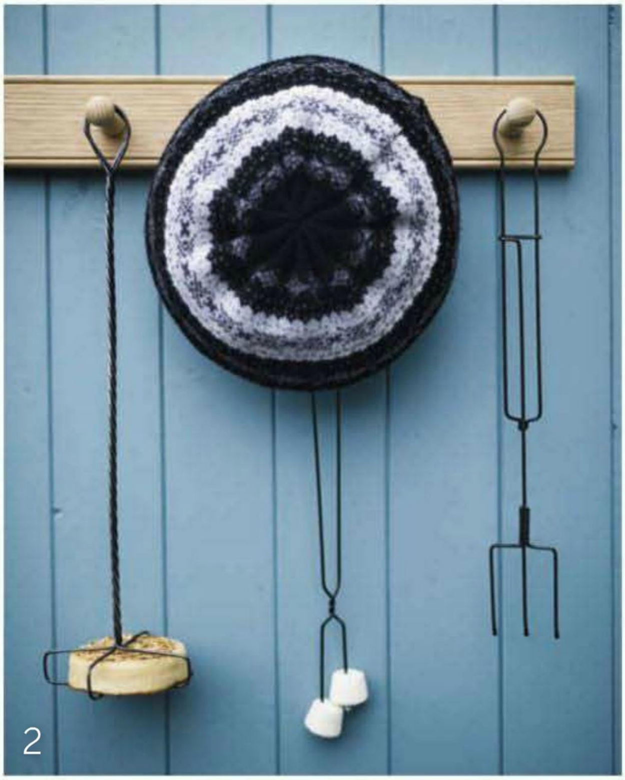
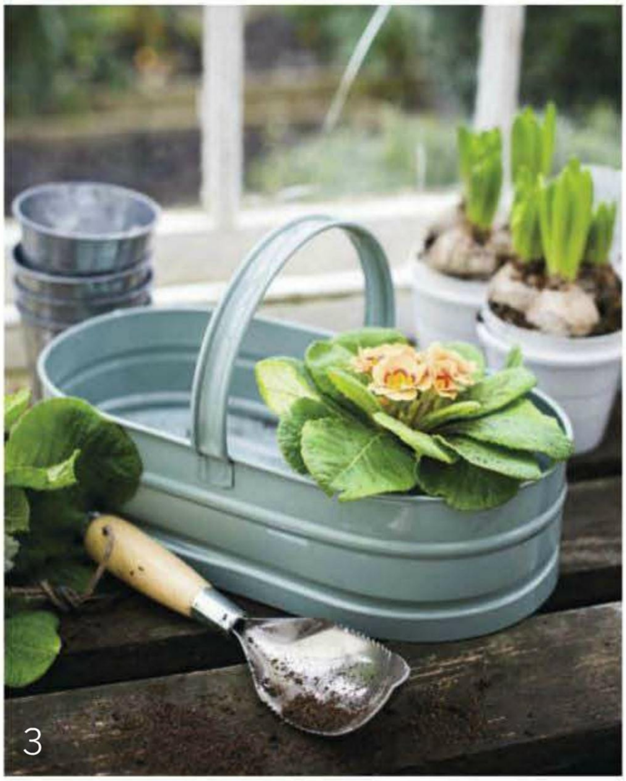
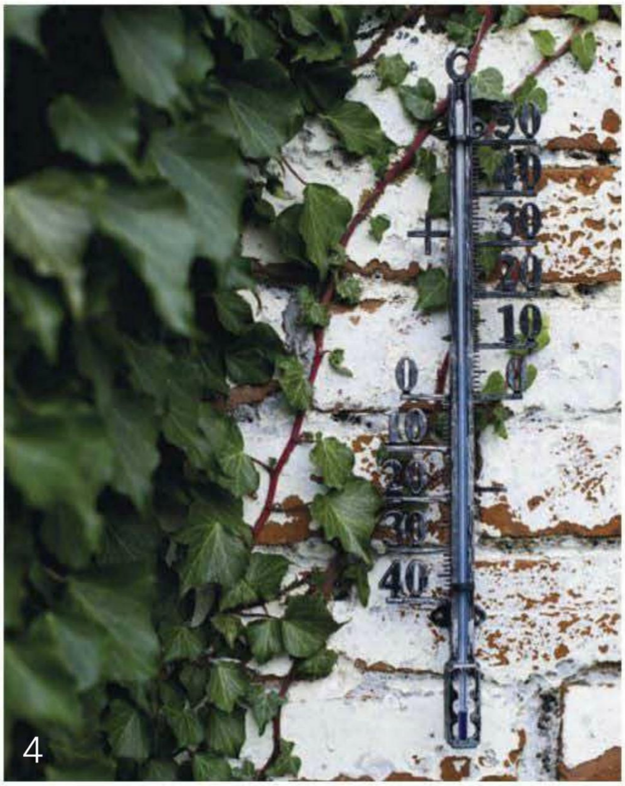
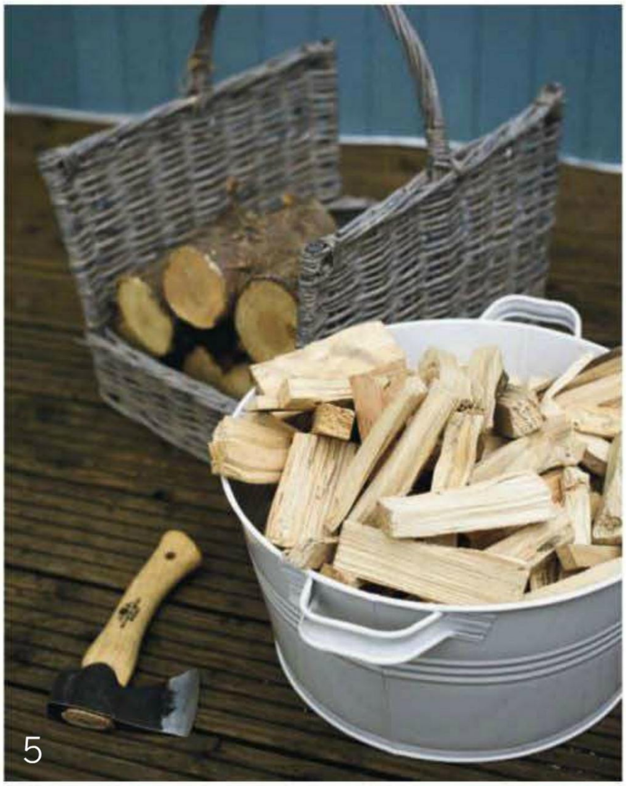




2 Simple **oak rail** with four hooks (56cm by 7cm) £24 from Tinsmiths (see 1, opposite). Fair Isle tam **hat** from Toast, £35, 0844 557 5200, www.toast.co.uk. From left to right, **crumpet toaster** £10.50, **marshmallow fork** £4.50 and extending **toasting fork** £10.50 all from Re-Found Objects, 01434 634567, www.re-foundobjects.com. **3** Burgon & Ball American **potting scoop** with notched sides to help disperse seeds evenly, £19.25 from Wiggly Wigglers as before. Oval **trug** in shutter blue, £16, **galvanised metal pots**, £1.80 each and **white herb pots** (available in sets of three on a tray) £18, all from Garden Trading, 0845 608 4448, www.gardentrading.co.uk



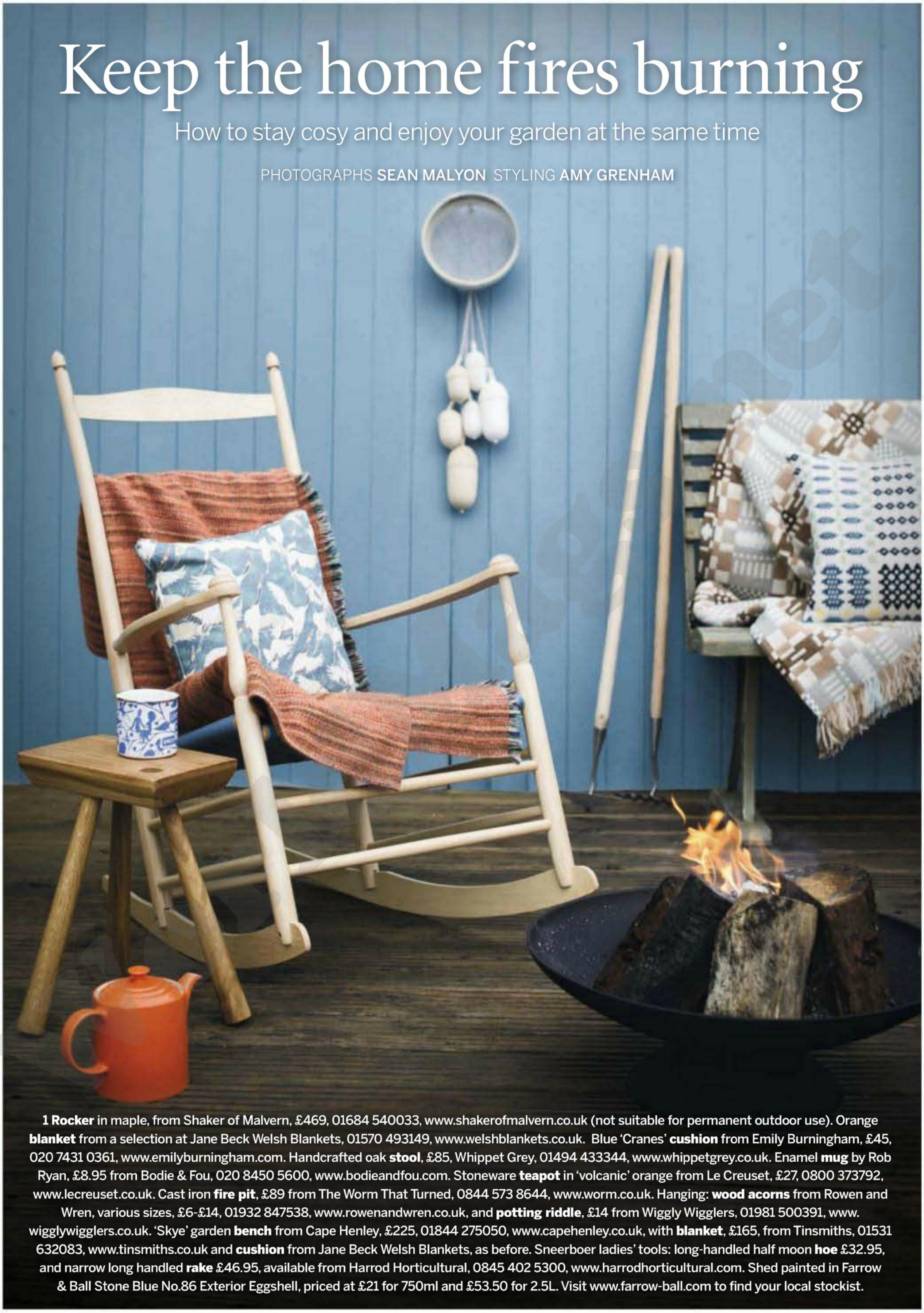


4 Metal filigree **thermometer**, £14.95, The Worm That Turned, as before. **5** Practical **wicker log carrier** with handle and steep sides to prevent your logs rolling out when carried, £45 from The Worm That Turned, as before. Sturdy 16L **enamel bucket** can be used to carry your kindling, £18, Garden Trading, as before. Gransfors Swedish **hand hatchet** is perfect for splitting kindling and comes with a leather blade cover for safe transportation, Pedlars, 01330 850400, www.pedlars.co.uk. ☐

Keep the home fires burning

How to stay cosy and enjoy your garden at the same time

PHOTOGRAPHS **SEAN MALYON** STYLING **AMY GRENHAM**



1 Rocker in maple, from Shaker of Malvern, £469, 01684 540033, www.shakerofmalvern.co.uk (not suitable for permanent outdoor use). Orange **blanket** from a selection at Jane Beck Welsh Blankets, 01570 493149, www.welshblankets.co.uk. Blue 'Cranes' **cushion** from Emily Burningham, £45, 020 7431 0361, www.emilyburningham.com. Handcrafted oak **stool**, £85, Whippet Grey, 01494 433344, www.whippetgrey.co.uk. Enamel **mug** by Rob Ryan, £8.95 from Bodie & Fou, 020 8450 5600, www.bodieandfou.com. Stoneware **teapot** in 'volcanic' orange from Le Creuset, £27, 0800 373792, www.lecreuset.co.uk. Cast iron **fire pit**, £89 from The Worm That Turned, 0844 573 8644, www.worm.co.uk. Hanging: **wood acorns** from Rowen and Wren, various sizes, £6-£14, 01932 847538, www.rowenandwren.co.uk, and **potting riddle**, £14 from Wiggly Wigglers, 01981 500391, www.wigglywigglers.co.uk. 'Skye' garden **bench** from Cape Henley, £225, 01844 275050, www.capehenley.co.uk, with **blanket**, £165, from Tinsmiths, 01531 632083, www.tinsmiths.co.uk and **cushion** from Jane Beck Welsh Blankets, as before. Sneerboer ladies' tools: long-handled half moon **hoe** £32.95, and narrow long handled **rake** £46.95, available from Harrod Horticultural, 0845 402 5300, www.harrodhorticultural.com. Shed painted in Farrow & Ball Stone Blue No.86 Exterior Eggshell, priced at £21 for 750ml and £53.50 for 2.5L. Visit www.farrow-ball.com to find your local stockist.

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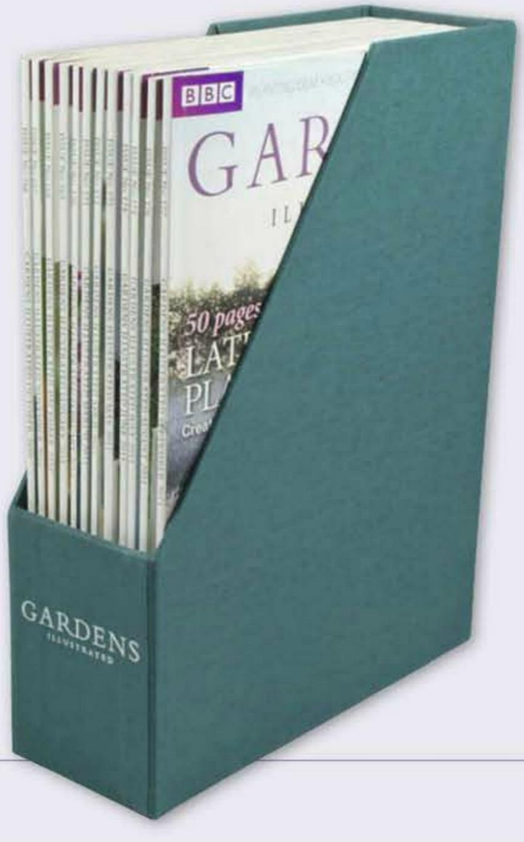

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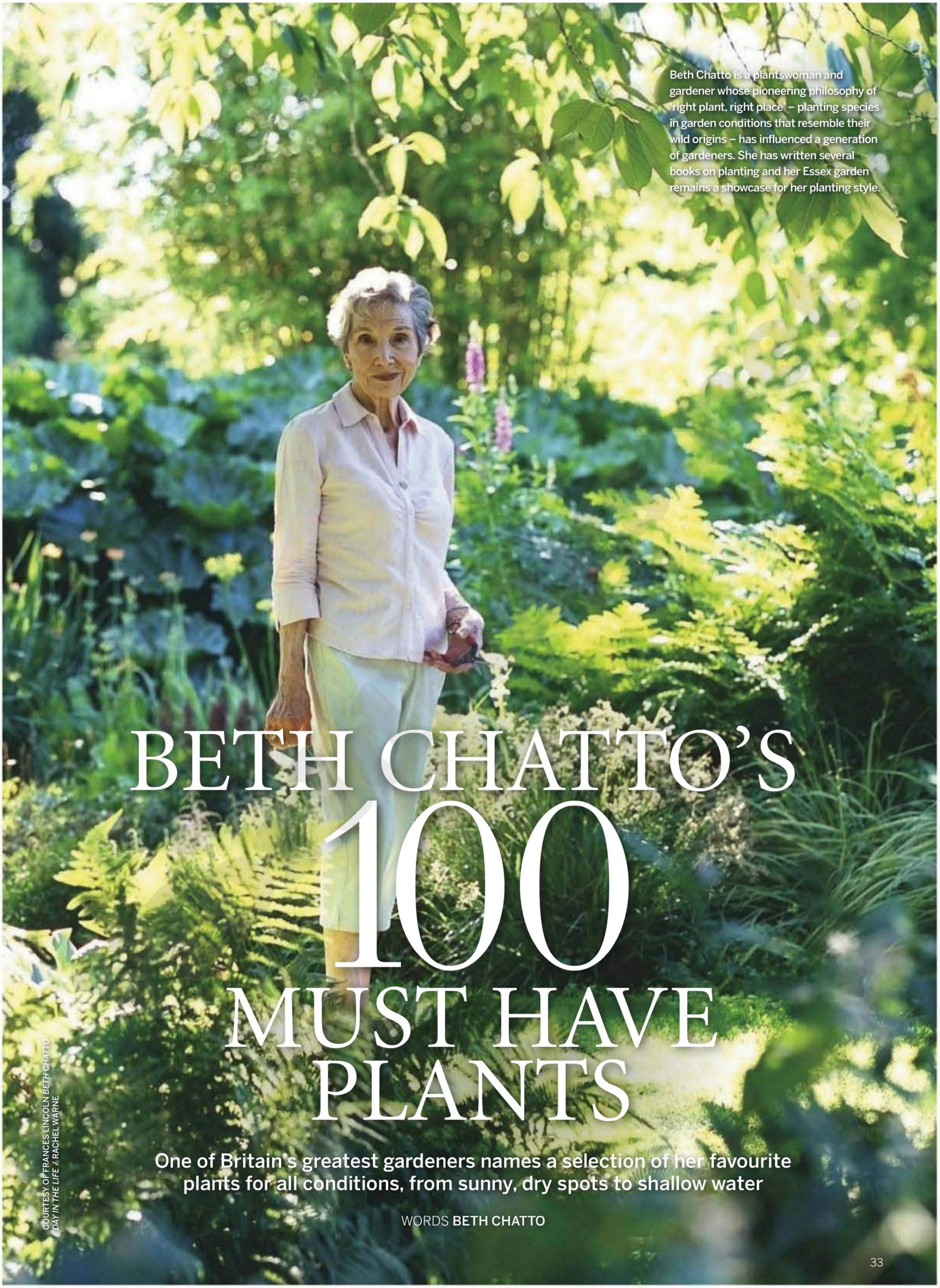

Beth Chatto is a plantswoman and gardener whose pioneering philosophy of 'right plant, right place' – planting species in garden conditions that resemble their wild origins – has influenced a generation of gardeners. She has written several books on planting and her Essex garden remains a showcase for her planting style.

BETH CHATTO'S 100 MUST HAVE PLANTS

One of Britain's greatest gardeners names a selection of her favourite plants for all conditions, from sunny, dry spots to shallow water

WORDS **BETH CHATTO**

COURTESY OF FRANCES LINCOLN *BETH CHATTO DAY IN THE LIFE* / RACHEL WARNE

Smaller drought-tolerant plants

1 ***ALYSSUM SPINOSUM* 'ROSEUM'**
A tough little plant with tiny grey leaves smothered in small, rose-pink flowers, this forms a useful bun-shape best used among ground-hugging plants such as thymes. A trim after flowering keeps it neat. SEASON June. Height (H) 20cm, spread (S) 40cm.

2 ***ARMERIA MARITIMA* 'DÜSSELDORFER STOLZ'**
A sea-thrift with tough, evergreen mounds of grassy-green foliage and a continuous show of large, light wine-red flowers on short stems. Regular deadheading will help maintain a tidy plant. Open, sunny position. SEASON Summer. H 13cm, S 60cm.

3 ***DIANTHUS* x *ARVERNENSIS***
Single, fragrant pink flowers of fringed petals press against low, neatly rounded clumps of grey leaves. Full sun; perfect for a raised bed. Grow with houseleeks or small sedums. SEASON Midsummer. H 8cm, S 40cm.

4 ***ERIGERON KARVINSKIANUS***
The daintiest of daisies on branching, wire-thin stalks, opening white, fading to rose and seldom out of flower. A native of Mexico, so give it full sun and good drainage. Seeds itself into cracks and crevices of walls or steps. SEASON Spring to autumn. H 30cm, S 45cm.

5 ***FESTUCA GLAUCA* 'ELIJAH BLUE'**
This looks wonderful in hot, dry weather, with needle-stiff leaves in grey-blue. Surround with carpeting plants such as dark sedums for a contrast in colour and form. SEASON Early summer to winter. H 30cm, S 20cm.

6 ***GYPSOPHILA REPENS* 'DUBIA'**
Ground-hugging mats of pewter-tinted foliage on dark red stems, smothered with pink-flushed white flowers. Lovely for a crevice or trailing from a ledge. SEASON May to June. H 8cm, S 30cm.

7 ***ORIGANUM VULGARE* 'THUMBLE'S VARIETY'**
For ground-covering carpets of fresh yellow-green leaves. All marjorams attract bees and other insects. A trim to ground-level after flowering encourages fresh foliage. SEASON Spring and summer. H 38-46cm, S 60cm.

8 ***RHODIOLA HETERODONTA***
The colour of the waxy leaves is fascinating – almost iridescent with lilac, amethyst, blue or grey. Bronze-pink flowers make a fine contrast. An accommodating plant for the dry garden and an ideal companion to sempervivums. SEASON Spring. H 25cm, S 25cm.

9 ***SEDUM SPURIUM* 'GREEN MANTLE'**
I value this for the fresh effect it makes, with bright green rosettes of fleshy leaves forming dense, wide-spreading ground cover on poor soil in open situations. Starry yellow flowers in summer. SEASON All year. H 10cm, S 1m.

10 **SEMPERVIVUMS**
We grow many, some as wide as a saucer, making handsome feature plants; others are tiny, suitable for sinks, trough gardens or crevices in the rock garden. Among the larger ones the texture is mostly waxen or smooth as marble; apple-green rosettes are tipped with mahogany and shadowed with purple, or bronze-red. The small ones are also found in warm shades of bronze and mahogany. There are even 'cobweb'-covered forms such as *Sempervivum arachnoideum*. SEASON All year. Sizes vary.

11 ***THYMUS LONGICAULIS***
Quickly forms wide-spreading mats of thin, wiry stems, with small, scented green leaves giving total ground cover. Completely covered in early summer with clustered heads of rosy-mauve flowers, and much admired. Ideal for quick evergreen cover in full sun. SEASON All year. H 10cm, spread indefinite.

12 ***ZAUSCHNERIA CALIFORNICA* 'DUBLIN'**
The hummingbird trumpet is native to hot, dry places on the west coast of North America, where it thrives in nutrient-deficient, sun-baked soil. This form, originally from Dublin's National Botanic

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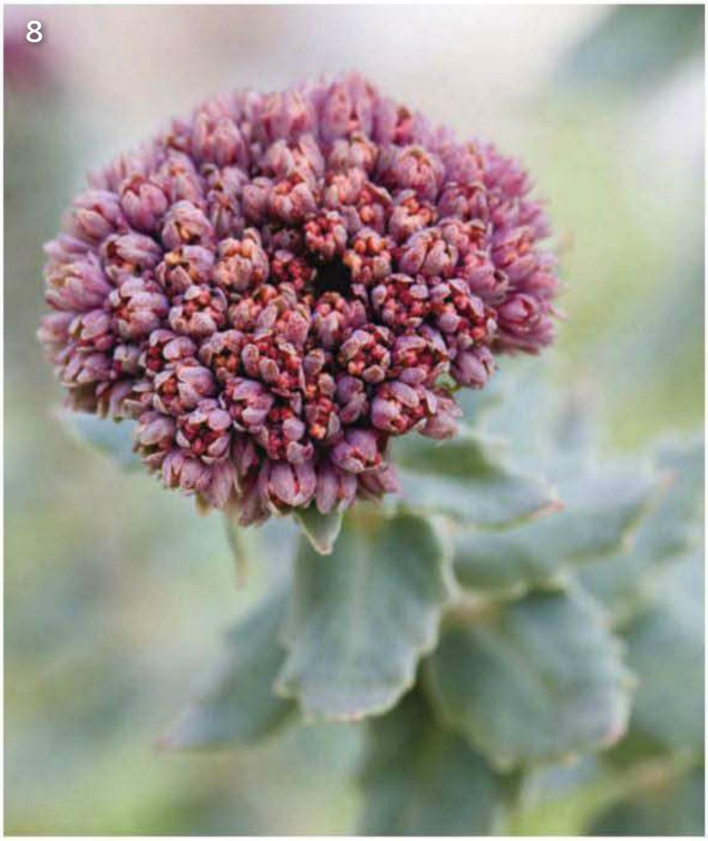
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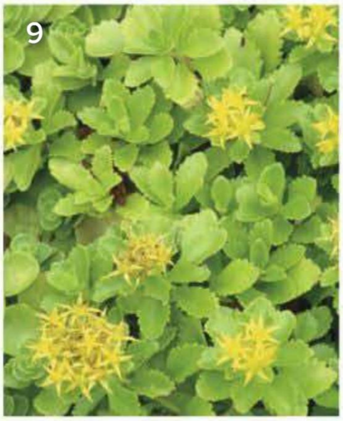
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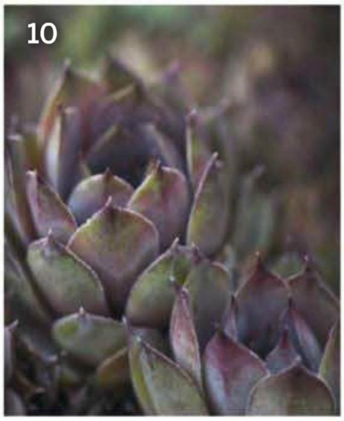
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3 RITA COATES / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES, 5 JO WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS, 8 ANNE GREEN-ARMYTAGE / GAP PHOTOS, 9 COURTESY OF BETH CHATTO'S NURSERY, 10 MARG COUSENS / GAP PHOTOS

Gardens at Glasnevin, produces a mass of scarlet, tubular flowers for weeks. Plant in the sunniest, driest position possible. SEASON Autumn. H 38cm, S 60cm.

Medium drought-tolerant plants

13 **AGAPANTHUS 'ARDERNE'**
Large, well-shaped heads of white flowers faintly touched with flecks of rose and purple on the tips of its petals, with black, dot-like anthers. Has proved perfectly hardy here in East Anglia, given full sun. SEASON Late summer. H 75-90cm, S 70cm.

14 **AURINIA SAXATILIS 'CITRINA'**
Forms a sprawling mound of grey-green leaves buried beneath sprays of tiny, cool-lemon flowers in spring. The softer colour is a change from spring's many bright yellows. Ideal for spilling over a bank or low wall in full sun. SEASON Spring. H 23cm, S 60cm.

15 **BALLOTA PSEUDODICTAMNUS**
One of the loveliest greys, an ideal foil to the comings and goings of colourful verticals such as alliums. From a woody base in spring, long, curving stems of round leaves clothed in grey-white felt emerge. The drier the soil the better. A good trim back into older, sprouting wood after flowering will encourage a well-furnished plant for winter. SEASON All year. H 75cm, S 80cm.

16 **BERGENIA 'ABENDGLOCKEN'**
Bergenias are among the most valuable plants as ground-cover, or for flower arranging. Being evergreen they are always a feature. In garden design, well-placed groups of bergenias are as important in drier areas as hostas are in richer, cooler soil. Many are valued for their vivid winter colour when sited in an open, sunny position. One of our favourites is *B.* 'Abendglocken'. Medium-sized spoon-shaped leaves form good rosettes, assuming bright cherry tints from late autumn and turning the darkest burnished purple in winter. It bears deep-pink flowers during April and May. SEASON All year. H 30cm, S 60cm.

17 **CISTUS x HYBRIDUS**
This rock rose forms a medium-sized bush of lighter-green, crinkled foliage. Its flower buds are pink, opening to white saucers. All cistuses flower from mid to late summer, and require well-drained soil, in sun. They can become leggy and untidy, and will smother other things if ignored too long. Shortening back to a lower shoot and thinning and cutting out worn or dead pieces after flowering will help. SEASON July to August. H 1.2m, S 1.2m.

18 **DICTAMNUS ALBUS**
An arresting sight when a mature plant carries many stems topped with spires of white, lily-like flowers, clothed in green, divided leaves, smelling deliciously of lemons. Curious, star-shaped seed-pods are a bonus for dried-flower arrangers. SEASON Early summer. H 76cm, S 50cm.

19 **ERYNGIUM BOURGATII**
Individual basal leaves shown off against dry bare soil are deeply divided, crisply curled and prickle-edged with broad, silvered veins and scattered spots like tiny sequins. Heads of blue-green flowers crown the plant. We grow a particularly fine form, and the bees appreciate it, too. SEASON Summer. H 50cm, S 40cm.

20 **ERYSIMUM SCOPARIUM**
Forms a woody bush carrying long stems of particoloured flowers. Dark-purple buds open to creamy yellow flowers feathered with mauve, each flower becoming entirely mauve with age. Flowers for months. SEASON Spring to summer. H 60cm, S 75cm.

21 **EUPHORBIA CHARACIAS subsp. WULFENII**
Invaluable in the garden and for flower arranging. Makes a dramatic feature plant for the dry garden. Long, stiff stems clothed in blue-grey foliage form a great clump, handsome all year round. Each stem carries a huge head of lime-green flowers. Likes shelter from wind. SEASON March to April and into May. H 1.2m, S 1m.

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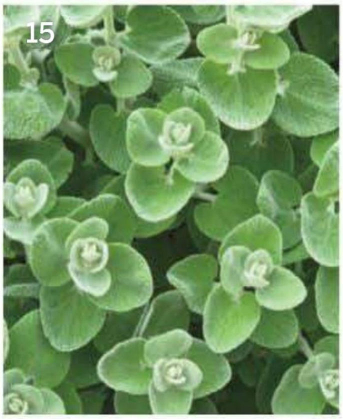
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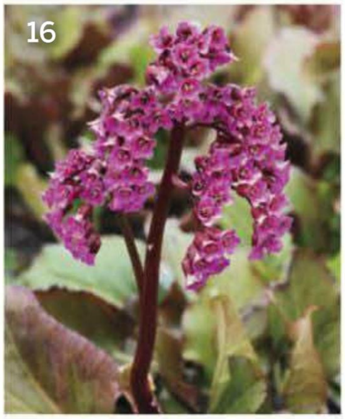
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15 KRYSTYNA SZULECKA / ALAMY, 16 MICHAEL HOWES / GAP PHOTOS, 17 MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS. 18 RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS, 19 HOWARD RICE GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY / GETTY

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22 ***EUPHORBIA MYRSINITES***

One of the most succulent-like plants for growing outside. From a central point radiate prostrate stems clothed in waxen-blue leaves, each ending in a large head of lime-green flowers. Thrives in the reflective warmth of gravel. A delight. SEASON Early spring. H 15cm, S 60cm.

23 ***EUPHORBIA POLYCHROMA***

One of the best spurges. Tidy mounds of brassy-yellow start flowering low down in early spring, increasing in height, with the whole plant taking on coral tints in autumn. SEASON Spring to autumn. H 60cm, S 60cm.

24 ***GAURA LINDHEIMERI***

White flowers, pink-flushed, float for weeks among graceful branches set with small willow-like leaves. Surprisingly, it's from the fuchsia family, and should be given the same treatment – don't cut back the woody stems to ground level until the spring, thus offering some extra winter protection. Needs full sun and well-drained soil. SEASON Midsummer to autumn. H Up to 1m, S 45cm.

25 ***GERANIUM MACRORRHIZUM* 'INGWERSEN'S VARIETY'**

Invaluable for dry shade, colonising the ground with rooting stems that make dense cover in cool conditions. Green, fragrant foliage, soft lilac-pink flowers, some autumn colour among foliage retained throughout the winter. SEASON All year. H 38cm, spreading habit.

26 ***GYPSOPHILA* 'ROSENSCHLEIER'**

Translates as 'rosy veil', and aptly named. The plant forms a low cumulus cloud of tiny, palest-pink double flowers, on the border edge, for weeks. Trim the whole plant by half after flowering and it will re-bloom again into October. SEASON, Midsummer to autumn. H 30cm, S 50cm.

27 ***HELIANTHEMUM* 'RHODANTHE CARNEUM'**

This rock rose (formerly 'Wisley Pink') is smothered in rose-pink flowers with flushed yellow centres. If pruned back well after flowering, the plants re-grow into mounds of small, oval leaves, which look as if they have been stamped out of pale-grey felt. SEASON Late spring to midsummer. H 30cm, S 40cm.

28 ***HELICHRYSUM ITALICUM***

Called the curry plant, because of its aromatic scent. A small, tidy bush of grey leaves carries crowded heads of small yellow flowers. An occasional trim encourages fresh foliage. SEASON Midsummer. H 61cm, S 50cm.

29 ***LAVANDULA STOECHAS***

A compact little bush covered in late summer with curious knobbly flower heads, which carry two kinds of flower. The small fertile flowers, arranged in vertical rows, are dark purple-blue. Above them, to entice pollinating insects, is a 'flag' of large, wavy petals, of a lighter shade of purple. This plant needs very well-drained soil. SEASON Mid to late summer. H 38cm, S 30cm.

30 ***LIBERTIA PEREGRINANS***

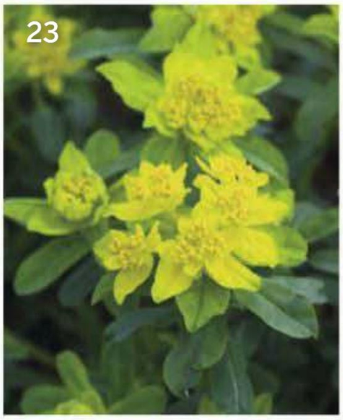
Individual fans form clumps of narrow, stiff leaves with wide, central veins stained orange. The entire plant makes a distinctive focal point, especially in winter. Increases by running stolons, so babies may appear some way off. I like mine coming through carpets of *Thymus pulegioides* 'Bertram Anderson', but any low-growing thyme will do. SEASON All year. H 46cm, running habit.

31 ***NEPETA* 'SIX HILLS GIANT'**

Although larger than many catmints, this form is equally useful and said to be hardier. Large sprays of lavender-blue flowers in midsummer. Cut back hard after flowering and this catmint will rebloom a few weeks later. SEASON Summer. H 76cm, S 60cm.

32 ***PAPAVER ORIENTALE* 'ZUNEIGUNG'**

(Translates charmingly as 'tender affection'.) Outstanding yet modest. A double layer of exquisite, pale salmon-pink petals is ruched around dark-purple stamens and seed box. Bleaches slightly to give a two-tone effect.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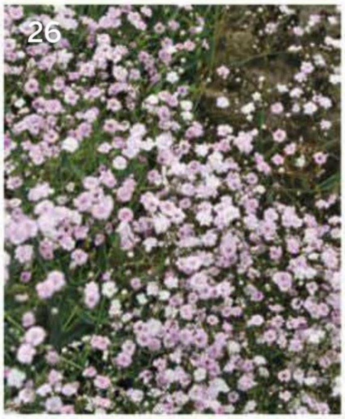
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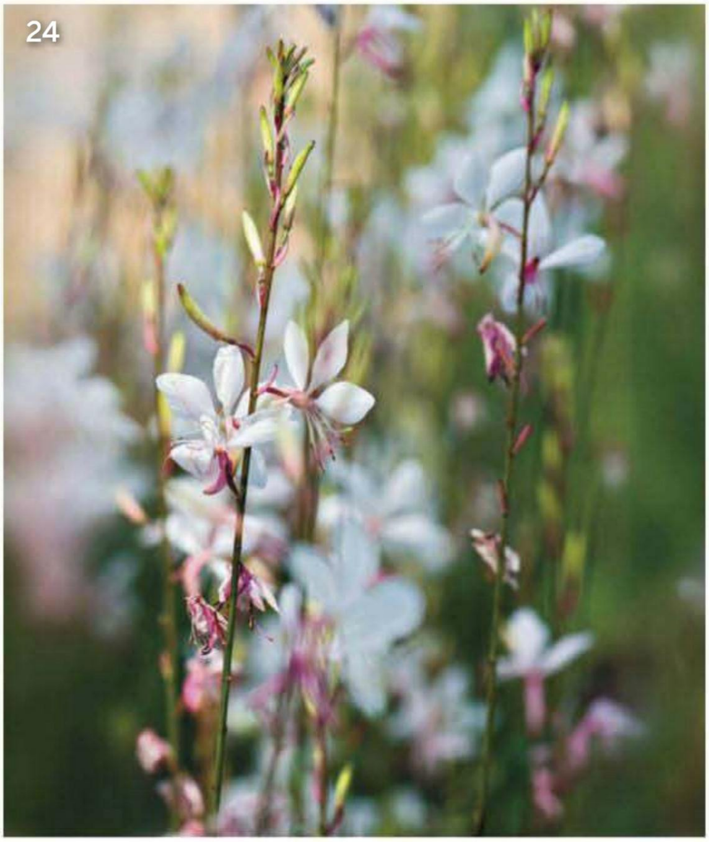
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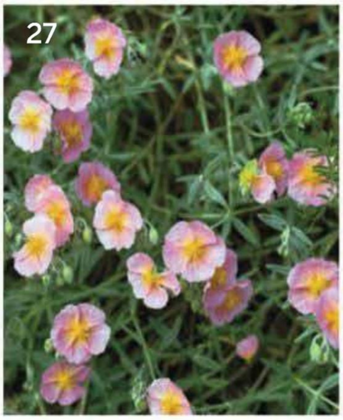
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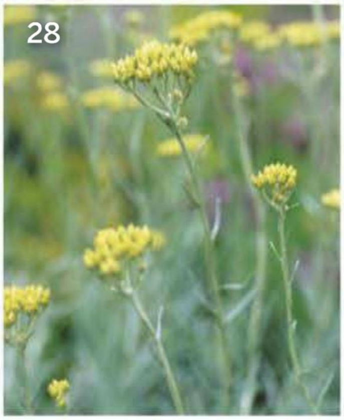
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23 GAP PHOTOS, 24 JACKY PARKER / ALAMY, 26 STEFFEN HAUSER / BOTANIKFOTO / ALAMY.
27 NIALL MCDIARMID / ALAMY, 28 MARIANNE MAJERUS / MMGI

Freely produced, medium-sized flowers stand up well to wind and weather. SEASON Late spring to midsummer. H Up to 1m, S 50cm.

33 *PEROVSKIA* 'BLUE SPIRE'

Makes a vertical feature as soon as the slender, whitened stems, lightly clad in fine-cut aromatic grey leaves, appear in the dry sunny garden. In late summer they are topped with long spires of lavender-blue flowers. The pale vertical stems make an attractive vertical feature until cut down in spring. SEASON Summer. H 122cm, S 60cm.

34 *SALVIA OFFICINALIS* 'PURPURASCENS'

The young summer foliage of purple sage is a delight – a soft greyish-purple velvet, with spikes of purple-blue flowers. It will form a lax bush, but can be kept under control through careful pruning in spring. SEASON Summer. H 61cm, S 75cm.

35 *SEDUM* 'RED CAULI'

Aptly named. An unusual colour form, with dense red flower heads during late August through to September. Attractive grey foliage on dark stems. Full sun and a well-drained soil. SEASON Late summer. H 40cm, S 30cm.

36 *STIPA GIGANTEA*

With great, airy heads of metallic, oat-like flowers quivering on stiff 1.8m stems, this is one of the most decorative grasses, taking up surprisingly little room on the ground. From dense, basal clumps of fine, narrow leaves spring many tall stems carrying superb heads of oat-like flowers, which shimmer as if made from beaten gold. A long-lasting feature for months. SEASON Summer. H 2m, S 70cm.

37 *VERBENA BONARIENSIS*

For hot, dry positions, tall, rigid branching stems are topped with tight-packed, flat clusters of small, mauvish, scented flowers. Standing high above the silver plants, they make summer 'screens' to view the garden through. Allow to seed as a safeguard against hard winters. SEASON Late summer to autumn. H Up to 1.5m, S 60cm.

Plants for shallow water

38 *ACORUS CALAMUS* 'ARGENTEOSTRIATUS'

Sweet flag grows in bog or shallow water, with handsome, sword-like leaves in boldly variegated cream and green, and rose-pink bases in spring. The roots and leaves have a spicy fragrance, valued when earth floors were strewn with sweet-scented rushes. Dried, they are still used as flavouring, among other things in toothpaste, gargles and gin. SEASON All year. H 90cm, S 60cm.

39 *CALTHA PALUSTRIS* 'MAJOR'

This giant marsh marigold is an impressive foliage plant for damp soil or pond side, where it makes large rafts of rich, shining leaves. Flowers fewer, larger and earlier than the species. SEASON Spring. H 60cm; will spread to fill any available space.

40 *CAREX ELATA* 'AUREA'

Bowles's golden sedge is a lovely sight by the water's edge or in a sunny place in damp soil. This graceful sedge has bright golden, grass-like foliage with pointed clusters of brown flowers held stiffly upright in June. SEASON Spring to midsummer. H 60cm, S 50cm.

41 *IRIS LAEVIGATA* 'VARIEGATA'

The best of variegated plants for the waterside, or in a few inches of water. Leaves, sharply striped in green and ivory-white, fan out to keep their bright colour throughout the growing season. Light blue flowers. SEASON Flowers early and midsummer. H 46cm, S 60cm.

42 *IRIS PSEUDACORUS* 'VARIEGATA'

This is a handsome form of our native yellow flag, the water iris, which grows in marshy ground or shallow water. It will also grow in rich, retentive soil. In early spring the newly emerging fans of leaves are pale butter-yellow. This remains for several weeks, deepening as the leaves mature, until by June they are green. Yellow flowers have distinct brown markings. SEASON Flowers mid and late summer. H 76cm, S 60cm.

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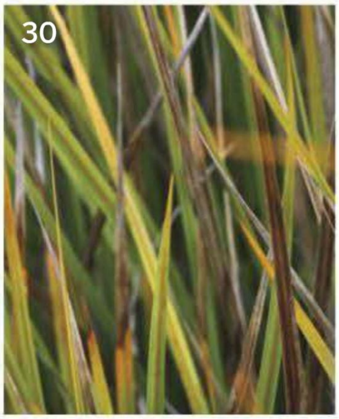

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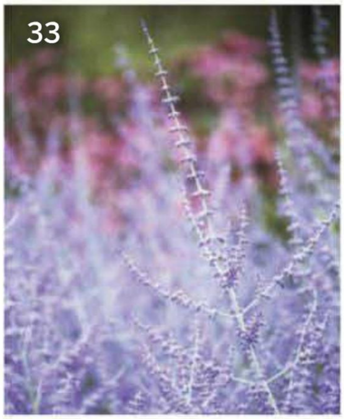

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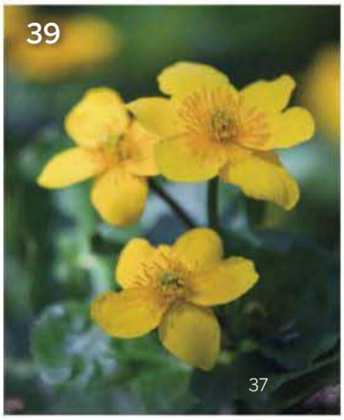


30 ABBY REX / GAP PHOTOS. 33 FLOWERPHOTOS / CAROL SHARP / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES. 34 JOHN GLOVER / ALAMY.
35 TORIE CHUGG. 39 DAVID CHAPMAN / ALAMY

▷ 43 ***IRIS* x *ROBUSTA* 'GERALD DERBY'**
Valued for the purple-stained base to leaves and purple stems bearing blue flowers. Will grow in shallow water or heavy, retentive soil. SEASON Midsummer. H 91cm, S 75cm.

44 ***LYSICHITON* x *HORTENSIS***
Showing hybrid vigour, the flower spathes and foliage of this skunk cabbage are much larger than either parent (*L. americanus* and *L. camtschatcensis*). The creamy-white spathe can stand 60cm tall, up to 30cm across at its widest point. Vast clusters of paddle-shaped leaves push up fast to finally make a grand architectural statement by the water's edge. SEASON Summer. H Up to 1.5m, S 1.2m.

45 ***PONTEDERIA CORDATA***
Pickerel weed is most handsome, spreading slowly out into deeper water from the boggy edge. Standing above the water are crowded stems of beautiful leaves, spear-shaped and marked with faint swirling lines and shadows, all topped with spikes of small blue flowers. SEASON Late summer to early autumn. H 46cm above water level, S 60cm.

Plants for sun, and soil that does not dry out

46 ***ANGELICA ARCHANGELICA***
A great plant valued both for its architectural effect and delicate flavour. In its second year there rises, from the broad, divided leaves, a stout branching stem ending in wide heads of cow parsley-type flowers. Unfortunately, it is biennial, so it dies after flowering. Cut it down before it has seeded everywhere and keep a few seedlings as replacements. SEASON Late summer. H 2m. S 70cm.

47 ***ASTRANTIA* 'BUCKLAND'**
Astrantias prefer retentive soil, improved with leaf-mould, in partial shade. Deadheading will extend the flowering season into autumn, and prevent unwanted seedlings, which are unlikely to come true from selected forms. *A.* 'Buckland' has white outer 'ray' bracts, green-tipped, filled with a posy of quivering, tiny, pink flowers, the overall effect pale pink. Very free-flowering, for weeks. SEASON Midsummer. H 75cm, S 40cm.

48 ***CAMPANULA LACTIFLORA***
A splendid sight when stout, leafy stems are crowned with great heads of powder-blue bell flowers. The pink and white forms are useful, too, well-placed among shrubs, especially shrub roses. SEASON Mid and late summer. H 1.5m, S 40cm.

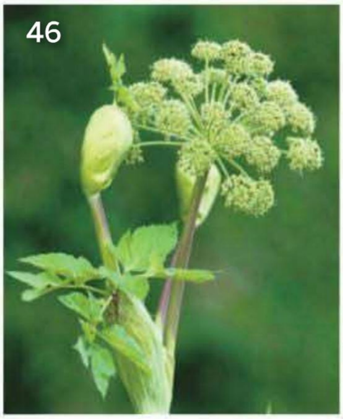
49 ***CROCOSMIA* x *CROCOSMIIFLORA* 'EMILY MCKENZIE'**
This hardy, vigorous plant produces branching stems of rich, orange flowers, splashed with wallflower-red. Each flower is large, the petals opening wide to create a flat star-shape instead of the small, lily-shaped flowers of common montbretia. SEASON August. H 61cm, S 30cm.

50 ***EUPHORBIA PALUSTRIS* 'WALENBURG'S GLORIE'**
On the upper half of its erect, branched stems, this bears heads of bright yellowy-green flowers, similar to *E. palustris*, but with warmer yellow tones. Narrow, pale-green leaves have a faint white central vein. SEASON Spring to autumn. H 1m. S 80cm.

51 ***FILIPENDULA PURPUREA* 'ELEGANS'**
This lovely meadowsweet has deep rose-pink flowers that imperceptibly change into bronze-red seedheads, making a feature for weeks in good, moist soil. SEASON Late summer and autumn. H 91cm, S 45cm.

52 ***GUNNERA TINCTORIA***
Differs from *G. manicata* in its more rounded, deeply lobed leaves and shorter leaf-stalks. More obviously, the primaeval-looking seedhead of *G. tinctoria* resembles a knobbly club, while the fruiting spike of *G. manicata* has long, finger-shaped seedheads. A massive plant for the water's edge. SEASON Spring to autumn. H 2m, S 2m.

53 ***HELENIUM* 'SONNENWUNDER'**
Stiff, upright stems are topped with large, branching heads of clear yellow daisies, a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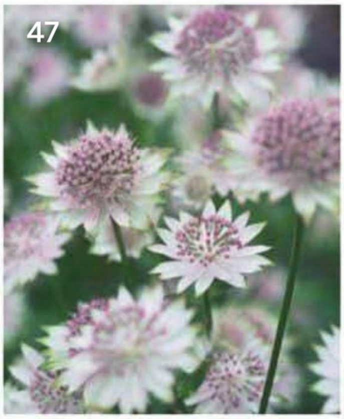
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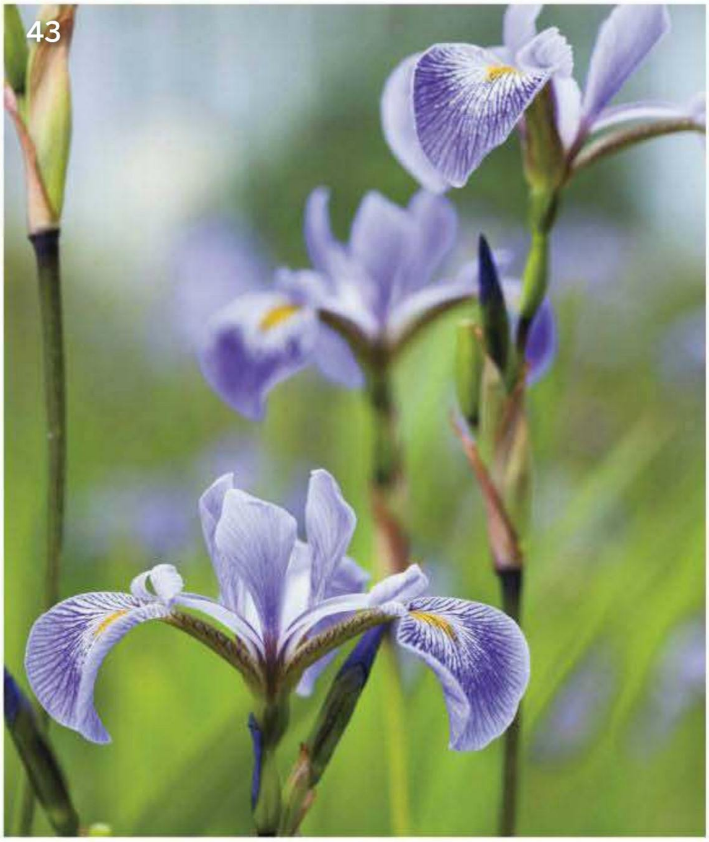
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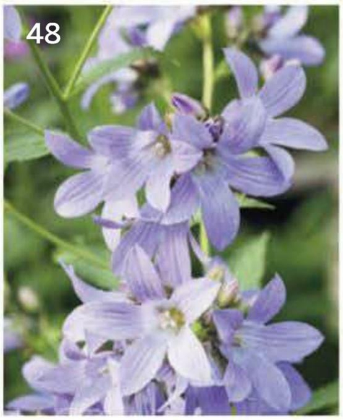
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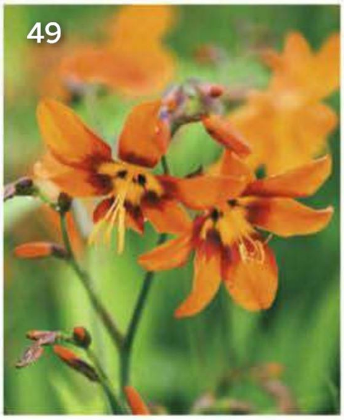
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43 RACHEL WARNE. 46 ARCO IMAGES GMBH / ALAMY. 47 ANDREA JONES / ALAMY. 48 ELKE BORKOWSKI / GAP PHOTOS. 49 CLIVE NICHOLS / GAP PHOTOS

change from sneezewort's usual burnt oranges and yellows. Its flowers fill my vases for several weeks. SEASON September to October. H 1.2m, S 50cm.

54 *HEMEROCALLIS LILIOASPHODELUS*

Daylilies are easy plants in any soil except the very dry. They thrive in sun or part shade. Their light green foliage is valuable in early spring. Later these grassy clumps make good ground-cover. *H. lilioasphodelus* is a lovely species that has been grown since the 16th century. Light yellow flowers are sweetly scented, and lovely among blue or pink cranesbills. SEASON Early summer. H 76cm, S 50cm.

55 *IRIS SIBIRICA* 'WHITE SWIRL'

With ivory-white falls and a yellow and green-veined heart, these flowers combine size, substance and elegance. We grow several Siberian irises, many in shades of blue and purple. SEASON Early summer. H Up to 90cm, S 60cm.

56 *LEUCANTHEMUM x SUPERBUM* 'BECKY'

I heartily recommend this Shasta daisy for its sturdy, upright habit and abundance of flowers, each consisting of a double row of flat, chalk-white petals surrounding the large, central yellow disc. Flowers later than most. SEASON Summer. H 137cm, S 75cm.

57 *LYTHRUM SALICARIA* 'BLUSH'

Most loosestrifes are of a stronger pink, so it's a pleasure to grow this most attractive form with slender spires of pale rose-pink flowers. For retentive soil and sun. SEASON Summer to early autumn. H 122cm, S 40cm.

58 *PERSICARIA BISTORTA* 'SUPERBA'

Always reminds us of our Chelsea show days as an invaluable plant for a moister soil. Massed stems carry thick, cyclamen-pink pokers above handsome, dock-like foliage. Needs to be cut back after flowering. SEASON Early summer. H 76cm; spreading habit.

59 *PRIMULA JAPONICA*

The first candelabra primula to flower. Huge rosettes of lettuce-like leaves support thick stems carrying whorls of pink, magenta or white flowers. Allow to seed around to form drifts through emerging foliage of other later-flowering, damp-loving plants. SEASON April to May. H 61cm, S 25cm.

60 *RODGERSIA PODOPHYLLA*

Rodgersias are among the finest foliage plants for marshy land, waterside or cool, damp soil. They will grow in sun if the soil is moist, and in shade, provided soil does not dry out. *R. podopyhlla*'s unfolding leaves are bronze in spring, turning green as they expand. Each dramatically handsome leaf consists of five large leaflets, broadly triangular in outline, with jagged tips, arranged at the top of each stem. SEASON Spring to autumn. H 61cm, slowly spreading habit.

61 *RUDBECKIA FULGIDA* var. *SPECIOSA*

Making a bright display for weeks, this daisy forms mounds of dark green foliage to set off large, orange-yellow flowers, each with a black eye. The dark seedheads are worth leaving. SEASON Autumn. H 61cm, S 50cm.

62 *TROLLIUS EUROPAEUS*

The wild globe flower is unbeatable with its exquisite pale-lemon globes of tightly layered petals held over mounds of fast-growing, glossy, cut foliage. Long-lived and trouble-free. SEASON Early summer. H 76cm, S 45cm.

Plants for shade or semi shade

63 *ANEMONE NEMOROSA* 'ROBINSONIANA'

Spreading patches of twig-like rhizomes produce an early patch of greenery, plus light-blue flowers with silvery-white backs to the petals. Looks wonderful with the yellow of Bowles's golden grass (*Milium effusum* 'Aureum', number 78). Or try planting it near clumps of hosta for contrast. SEASON Spring to early summer. H 20cm, spreading habit.

64 *ARISAEMA TORTUOSUM*

From a large underground tuber rises a stout, purple-stained, bare stem. Half

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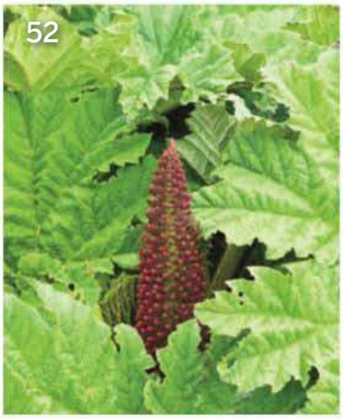
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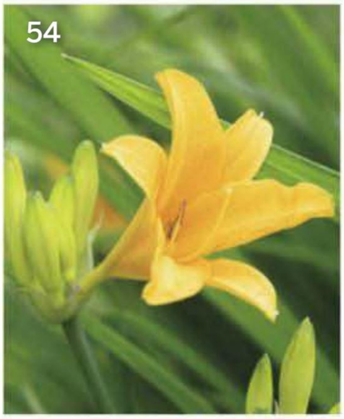
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52 KEVIN SCHAFER / ALAMY. 54 MAXINE ADCOCK / GAP PHOTOS. 55 STEFFEN HAUSER / BOTANIKFOTO / ALAMY. 57 ROB WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS. 59 MMGI / MARIANNE MAJERUS

▷ way up, two pinnate leaves emerge, while the final, bare green stems hold narrow, apple-green arum flowers. Spilling from beneath the curved lid is the long, thin, brown, tail-like spadix. Red berries ripen by late summer. It needs a soil rich with leaf-mould, and a sheltered position. SEASON Midsummer. H Up to 91cm, S 20cm.

65 *ARUNCUS DIOICUS* 'KNEIFFII'

This has flowers similar to goat's beard, *A. dioicus*, but daintier, as is the whole plant. The leaves look as though they have been eaten to the veins by some creature but perversely (perhaps because it is the natural state) these thread-like segments appear delicately attractive. This cultivar flowers slightly later than the species. SEASON Early and midsummer. H 75cm, S 40cm.

66 *BRUNNERA MACROPHYLLA*

Long sprays of tiny forget-me-not blue flowers are followed by robust clumps of huge and heart-shaped basal leaves, making good perennial ground-cover in shade. 'Jack Frost' is a recently introduced silvered form. SEASON Spring. H 45cm, S 40cm.

67 *CONVALLARIA MAJALIS*

When conditions are right, in humus-rich soil where there is room for wandering rhizomes – among shrubs, perhaps – why not plant a bed of lily-of-the-valley to scent the air and perhaps have handfuls to pick for the house? SEASON Late spring. H 15cm, spreading habit.

68 *DRYOPTERIS ERYTHROSORA*

For months, this rare fern from China and Japan continues to produce glossy new fronds in rosy-brown, turning green later. For a sheltered site, in plenty of humus. SEASON Spring to autumn. H 46cm, S 40cm.

69 *EPIMEDIUM* x *PERRALCHICUM* 'FRÖHNLEITEN'

This excellent evergreen is best cut down by early March to reveal delicate sprays of tiny bright-yellow flowers among emerging clumps of foliage beautifully marbled with reds and bronze. Good in dry shade. SEASON Spring. H 38cm, spreading habit.

70 *GERANIUM PHAEUM*

The mourning widow is a strong grower in shade, with small, silk-textured flowers of sombre, darkest-purple. Survives in dry shade and best cut down after flowering. SEASON Early summer. H 90cm, S 60cm.

71 *HAKONECHLOA MACRA* 'AUREOLA'

This grass never fails to cause comment. It makes soft clumps of foliage, each arching, ribbon-like leaf up to 60cm long and vividly variegated gold and buff with touches of bronze. SEASON All year. H 30cm, S 46cm.

72 *HELLEBORUS* x *HYBRIDUS*

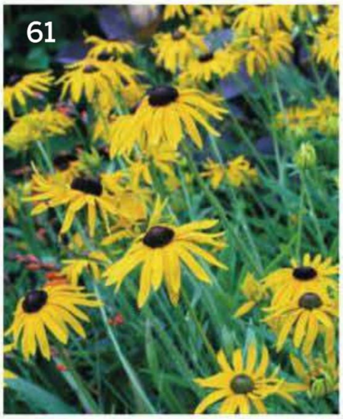
These are plants of long-lasting beauty, having handsome evergreen foliage, making bold ground-cover and bearing flowers of sculptured form. They are easy to grow when drainage is good and humus abundant. Flowers vary in colour from white to deep plum; they may be spotted, speckled, plain or shadowed with green. All are desirable. Fine evergreen foliage makes a feature all summer. We cut our leaves off in winter before the flowers appear, to prevent the spread of botrytis, which sometimes damages flowering stems. SEASON February to April. H Up to 46cm, S up to 46cm.

73 *HEUCHERA* 'RUFFLES'

Heucheras do not like to be scorched or dried out, so a cool situation in partial shade suits them best. They also need to be replanted in fresh soil every few years. 'Ruffles', the green counterpart of *Heuchera* 'Chocolate Ruffles', makes mounds of evergreen crinkly green foliage with flower spikes of creamy-green. Useful to give a cool effect to a shady spot. SEASON All year. H 30cm, S 40cm.

74 *HOSTA* 'FRANCES WILLIAMS'

I suspect there are several variations sold under this name. Mine was bred originally by Eric Smith, and seems larger and more handsome than some. Broad, heavily quilted,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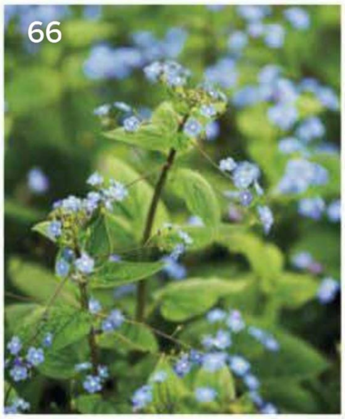
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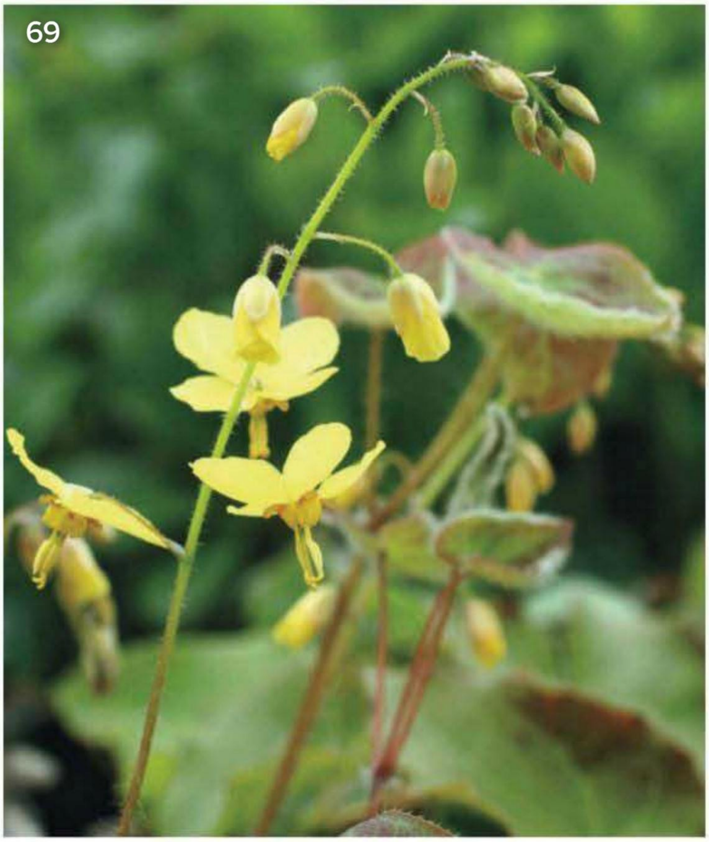
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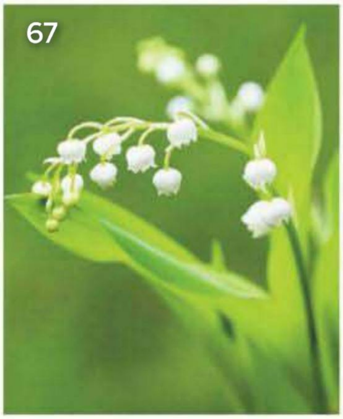
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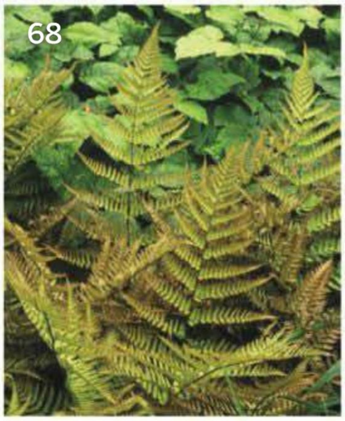
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61 MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY. 66 JO WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS. 67 MMGI / MARIANNE MAJERUS. 68 RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS. 69 MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY

waxed blue leaves have wide, irregular butter-yellow margins. Sumptuous in part shade. SEASON Summer. H 75cm, S 1m.

75 **HOSTA 'HALCYON'**
Raised by Eric Smith, this is possibly still the best blue-leafed hosta on offer. Heart-shaped leaves are so coated with fine wax film they appear blue. Fine heads of lilac-blue flowers on purplish stems in late summer. Wonderful grown alongside *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola' (see 71). SEASON Summer. H 30cm, S 40cm.

76 ***LAMPROCAPNOS SPECTABILIS***
Bleeding heart, or ladies' locket (formerly *Dicentra spectabilis*), needs rich, deep soil to produce tall, arching stems drooping with delicate rose-and-white lockets. This is a most elegant plant. The white form is equally desirable. SEASON Early summer. H 61cm, S 60cm.

77 ***MAIANTHEMUM RACEMOSUM***
Related to Solomon's seal, and very like it in its beautiful arching foliage, but instead of bells it has a tapering head of massed, fluffy, creamy-white flowers, sweetly scented. Likes cool soil. (Formerly *Smilacina racemosa*.) SEASON Late spring. H 76cm, S 60cm.

78 ***MILIUM EFFUSUM* 'AUREUM'**
Bowles's golden grass grows in non-running clumps of soft, bright yellow foliage that make patches of sunlight in shady places. Many fine stems support a cloud of tiny golden flowers like shining beads. It seeds around but is easily spotted and dislodged. SEASON Spring and early summer. H 60cm, S 30cm.

79 ***OMPHALODES CAPPADOCICA* 'CHERRY INGRAM'**
Gentian-blue, forget-me-not like flowers, larger than the type, free-flowering, outstanding effect for the shady border edge. SEASON Early spring. H 26cm, S 30cm.

80 ***PACHYPHRAGMA MACROPHYLLUM***
It is very pleasant to see this established under trees and shrubs, creating a carpet of large, round green leaves overlapping to make weed-free cover. The leaf veins and stems become purple-tinted in winter. As snowdrops fade, showy heads of white, cress-like flowers appear early in March before new leaves emerge. A native of wet forests in northeastern Turkey, northern Iran and the Caucasus. SEASON Spring and summer. H 46cm, spreading habit.

81 ***PAEONIA MLOKOSEWITSCHII***
A plant of exceptional beauty, which grows wild in the centre of the Caucasus. In early spring the buds and young leaves are a rich pinkish-bronze. As they turn to soft grey-green, the buds gradually open to full beauty, making perfect bowls of cool lemon-yellow, filled with golden stamens in May. SEASON Spring. H 60cm, S 50cm.

82 ***POLYGONATUM* x *HYBRIDUM***
This is the usual form of Solomon's seal. Close-set, spreading rhizomes send up tall, arching stems set with shining, dark green leaves, bearing white and green-flushed bells on the lower side of the leafy stems. Invaluable for flower-arranging and for planting in shady places. SEASON May. H 76cm, spreading habit.

83 ***PRIMULA VULGARIS***
The common yellow primrose is perhaps the loveliest of all the primulas. It can be tricky to establish, but once settled should provide cheery clumps, and will seed around. SEASON Spring. H 15cm, S 30cm.

84 ***PULMONARIA* 'BLUE ENSIGN'**
Lungworts make excellent ground-cover in fertile, moisture-retaining soil, preferring partial shade. They are among the first plants to flower. After flowering stems are removed, big basal clumps of large leaves, spotted or marbled with silver, remain all summer. Among the smaller-leafed forms, *P.* 'Blue Ensign' makes pools of wide-eyed, gentian-blue flowers, with dark, unspotted leaves. SEASON Late winter, spring and summer. H 38cm, S 45cm. ▷

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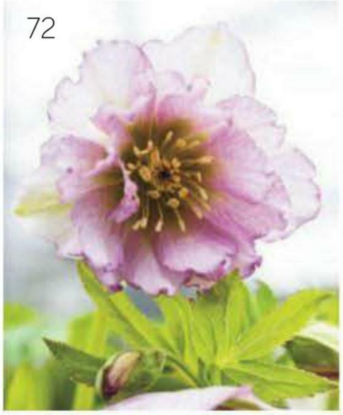
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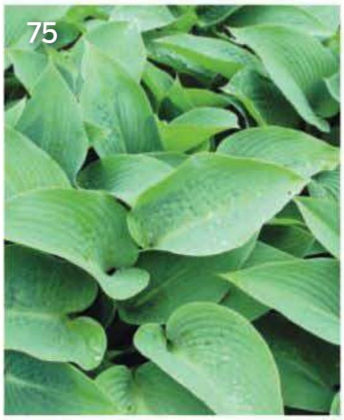
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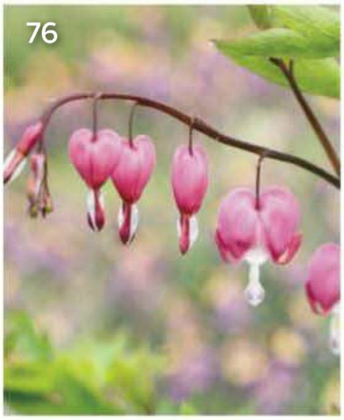
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70 FLOWERPHOTOS / CAROL SHARP / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES. 72 RACHEL WARNE. 75 PLANTOGRAPHY / ALAMY.
76 SHARON PEARSON. 77 TREVOR SIMS / GARDEN WORL DIMAGES

85 ***TIARELLA CORDIFOLIA***

From North American woodland, the running trails of pretty pointed green leaves form complete cover, in part shade. In spring they form a mass of foaming, creamy white flower spikes. It's exciting to hear that some attractively marked leaf forms are now available – I hope they prove as useful as this one. SEASON Early summer. H 30cm, S 30cm, with a running habit.

86 ***TRILLIUM CHLOROPETALUM* WHITE-FLOWERED**

These lovely woodland treasures need cool, shady conditions in soil enriched with plenty of leaf mould, that does not dry out. They are so called because each stem carries three leaves, three calyces and three petals, all joined at the top of the bare stem. The broad, wavy-edged, plain green leaves form a handsome 'collar' more than 25cm across, setting off the creamy-white, three-petalled flower. It looks dramatic where contrast is needed among small-leafed plants, such as *Tiarella*, or the golden-leafed creeping Jenny. We are proud to grow this plant, since my first stock from seed took eight years to flower. SEASON Spring. H 38cm, S 25cm.

87 ***UVULARIA GRANDIFLORA* var. *PALLIDA***

Native to the woods of eastern North America, a choice treasure for part-shade and a humus-rich soil. Dangling flowers in pale primrose-yellow twist and open more widely than those of *U. perfoliata*. SEASON Spring. H 46cm, S 30cm.

Seasonal delights, bulbs and corms

88 ***ALLIUM CRISTOPHII***

Amazing globular heads the size of a small football, each made of up to 80 metallic, lilac-purple stars. They dry in perfect shape, the delicate spoke-like stems remaining purple. For the dry garden in full sun. SEASON Midsummer. H 61cm, S 15cm.

89 ***ALLIUM SPHAEROCEPHALON***

On thin stalks, the plum-shaped, wine-purple heads of drumstick alliums are most effective in August, among the silver foliage plants of the dry garden or the grass *Stipa tenuissima*. SEASON Late summer. H 76cm.

90 ***CAMASSIA LEICHTLINII* subsp. *SUKSDORFII* 'ELECTRA'**

Camassias are bulbous plants from the prairies of northwest America. They produce the finest flowers in well fed, cultivated soil, ideally tucked behind or between low shrubs or plants where their long, lax leaves can be concealed. They look stately when naturalised in grass. The flowers of *C.* 'Electra' (twice as large as any other *Camassia*) are a rich amethyst-blue, arising on stout stems. SEASON May-June. H 91cm.

91 ***COLCHICUM* 'ROSY DAWN'**

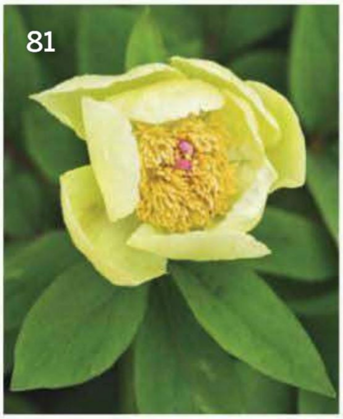
Colchicums are also called 'naked ladies' because they flower (in autumn) without leaves. Their foliage emerges in spring when there is little else, and I enjoy the contrast of their large, shining green clusters appearing through ground-covering vincas and *Geranium macrorrhizum.* (These plants also protect the flowers from mud-splash in autumn.) Do not cut the leaves down until they wither or you will starve the bulbs. 'Rosy Dawn' is a fine form with big, bold, rosy-mauve flowers that open 10cm across in the sun, showing a deep white throat and giving off a scent loved by bees. Strong stems stand up well to wind and wet. Increases freely. SEASON Autumn. H 20cm, S 10cm.

92 ***COLCHICUM SPECIOSUM* 'ALBUM'**

Superb white flowers, rounded like large wine goblets on pale green stems. To be treasured. SEASON Autumn. H 15cm, S 10cm.

93 ***CYCLAMEN HEDERIFOLIUM***

The earliest and showiest cyclamen for naturalising under trees or in grass. Established tubers produce rose-pink flowers in autumn, followed by clusters of overlapping, sombre-green leaves that are beautifully marbled with silver, every one different. SEASON Flowers in autumn, foliage in winter, spring and summer. H 10cm, S 15cm, with spreading habit.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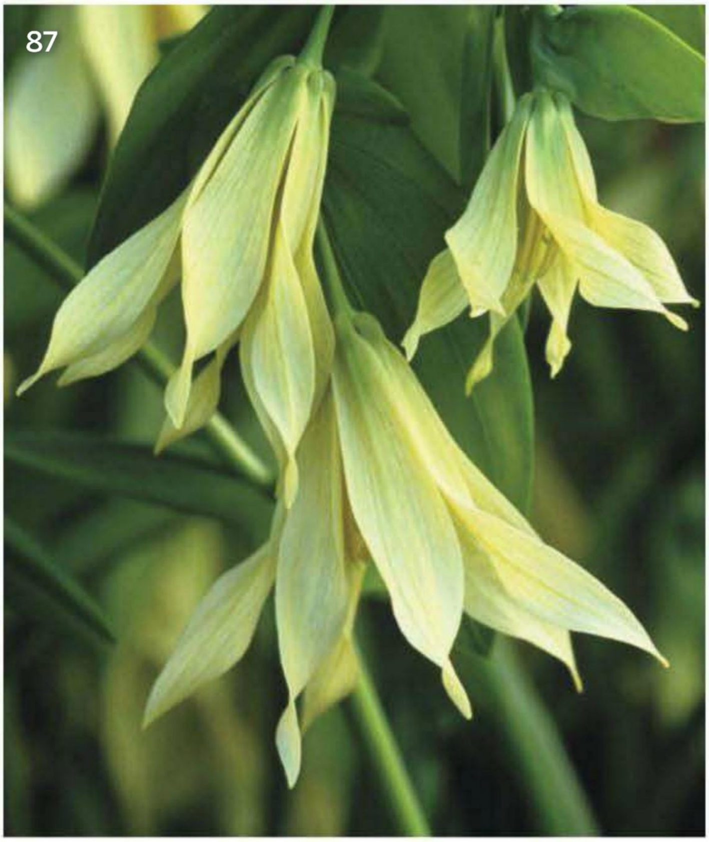
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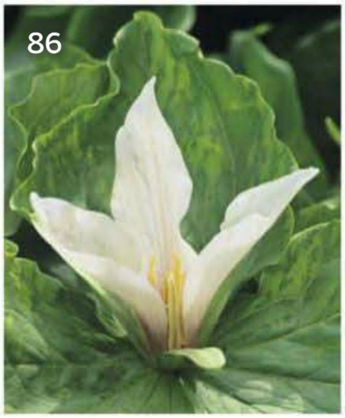
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81 CLIVE NICHOLS / GAP PHOTOS. 83 MADDIE THORNHILL / GAP PHOTOS. 84 FHF GREENMEDIA / GAP PHOTOS. 86 J S SIRA / GAP PHOTOS. 87 JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS

94 ***ERYTHRONIUM* 'PAGODA'**

One of the taller dog's tooth violets, with several green-backed, butter-yellow flowers on each tinted stem. Its broad, wavy, shining leaves are slightly marbled with brown. The best of my clumps grow in moist shade. SEASON April. H 30-40cm, S 10cm.

95 ***FRITILLARIA MELEAGRIS***

The snake's head fritillary is our native species, also found wild in most of central Europe to Scandinavia. It's a lovely plant that can still be seen growing wild in Britain, in a few protected water-meadows. It is easy to grow, provided the soil never dries out. The tapering chequered bells with angular 'shoulders' can be found in many shades. The white and palest pink ones are usually shaded and faintly chequered with green. The warm plum and sombre purple shades have darker chequering, sometimes overlaid with a greyish bloom. SEASON April-May. H 25-30cm, S 5-8cm.

96 ***FRITILLARIA PERSICA***

The Persian lily is from the Middle East, where it grows on rocky slopes, in scrub and the edge of cornfields. Stout stems, up to 1m tall in good soil, are clothed halfway up with twisting grey-green leaves, while the top half carries a spire of dusky purple bells. Thrives in full sun, in fertile soil. SEASON Spring. H Up to 1m, S 10cm.

97 ***GALANTHUS ELWESII* 'CEDRIC'S PROLIFIC'**

We have selected this exceptional snowdrop from stock originally grown in the Suffolk garden of artist and plantsman Sir Cedric Morris. Large, single flowers are held on tall stems supported by broad grey-green leaves (2.5cm across). A vigorous grower, quickly making generous clumps of bulbs, outstanding for effect. SEASON Late winter. H Up to 40cm, S 8cm.

98 ***NARCISSUS PALLIDIFLORUS***

This narcissus is very distinctive. The unopened buds face skywards like beaks, gradually lowering as they open pale, creamy yellow, perfectly shaped trumpet flowers. SEASON Early spring. H 25cm, S 8cm.

99 ***STERNBERGIA LUTEA***

Brightest of all the autumn-flowering bulbs are glistening, yellow sternbergias. Although they look very like crocuses, sternbergias are more closely related to daffodils, since they belong to the family *Amaryllidaceae*. Unlike crocuses, whose leaves do not appear until spring, sternbergia flowers appear clasped in clusters of dark green, shining, strap-shaped leaves. The flowers and fresh-looking leaves together are most invigorating to come across at this dying time of year. To encourage flowers as well as leaves, plant in a warm, sun-baked spot, in well-drained soil. SEASON Autumn. H 15cm, S 8cm.

100 ***TULIPA SPRENGERI***

The last wild tulip to flower. Unnoticed when in slim, green bud, they suddenly appear about the end of May, when you are startled to see wide-open scarlet, pointed petals. The attractive seed pods scatter their seed to produce little colonies of flowers in two to three years' time, if you refrain from hoeing them up. For full sun. SEASON Early summer. H 30-38cm, S 10cm. □

Reader offer

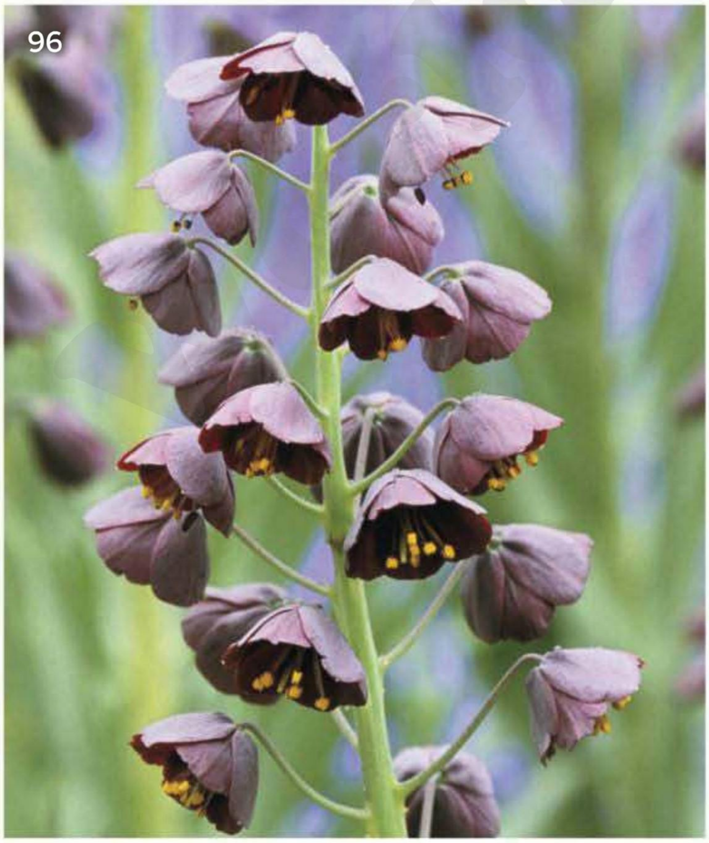
Buy Beth Chatto's must-have plants at an exclusive discount of 10% – from Beth's own nursery. **Turn to page 104** for more details.

Your favourites

Do you have an outstanding plant for a tricky location in your garden? Please share you planting ideas with other readers by email to **letters@gardensillustrated.com** or by post to the address on page 10.

USEFUL INFORMATION

The Beth Chatto Gardens are open to the public daily. ADDRESS Elmstead Market, Colchester, Essex CO7 7DB. TEL 01206 822007. WEBSITE www.bethchatto.co.uk



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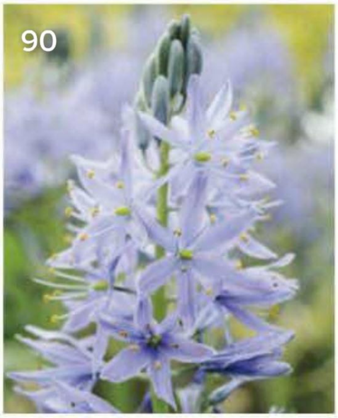

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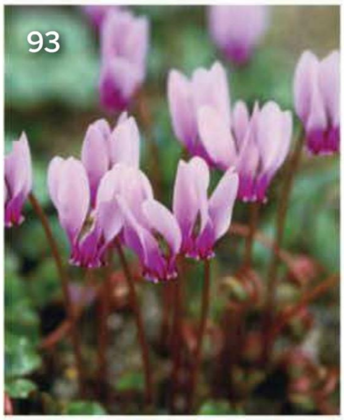

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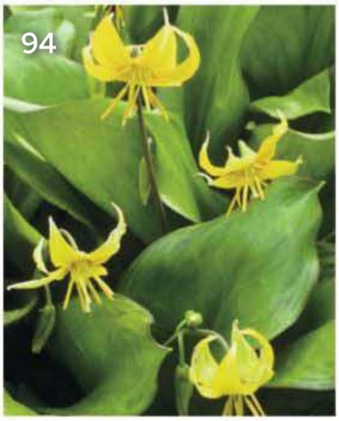

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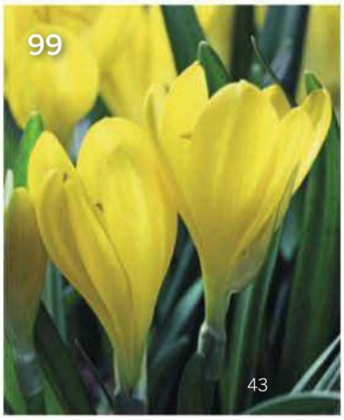

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90 JASON INGRAM / GAP PHOTOS. 93 HOWARD RICE / GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY / GETTY IMAGES. 94 MMGI / MARIANNE MAJERUS.
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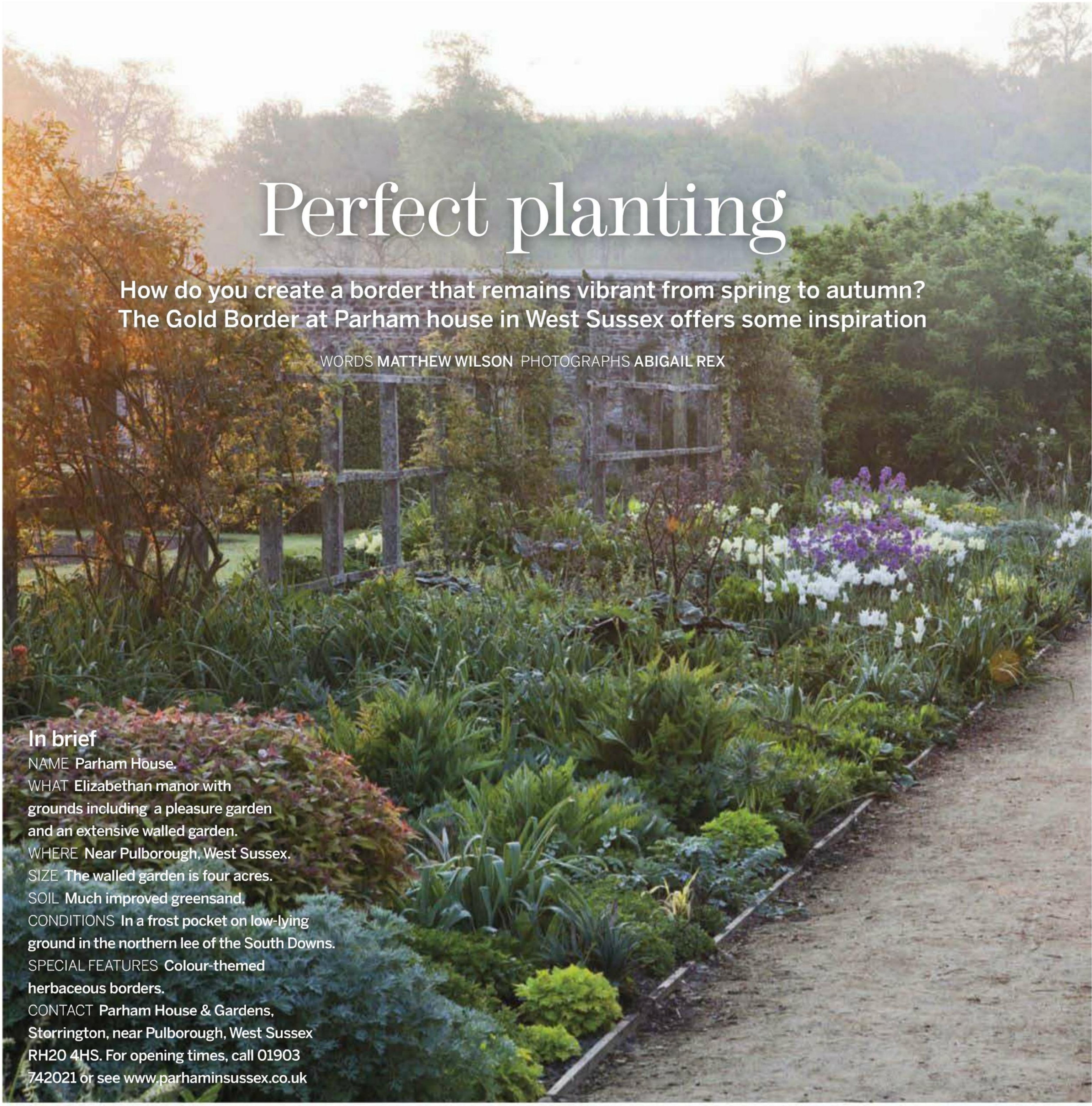


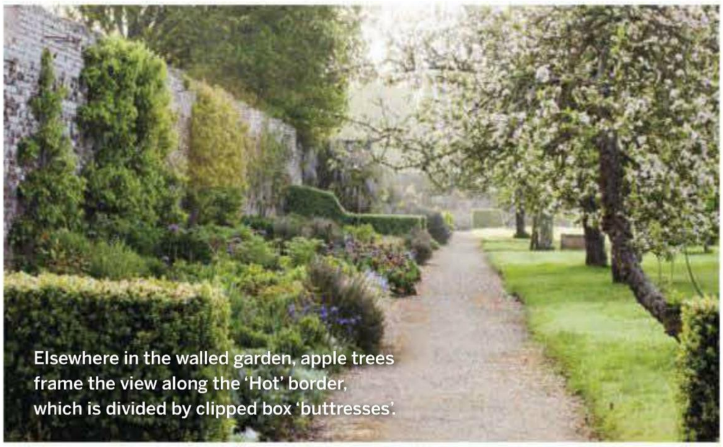
Perfect planting

How do you create a border that remains vibrant from spring to autumn? The Gold Border at Parham house in West Sussex offers some inspiration

WORDS **MATTHEW WILSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **ABIGAIL REX**

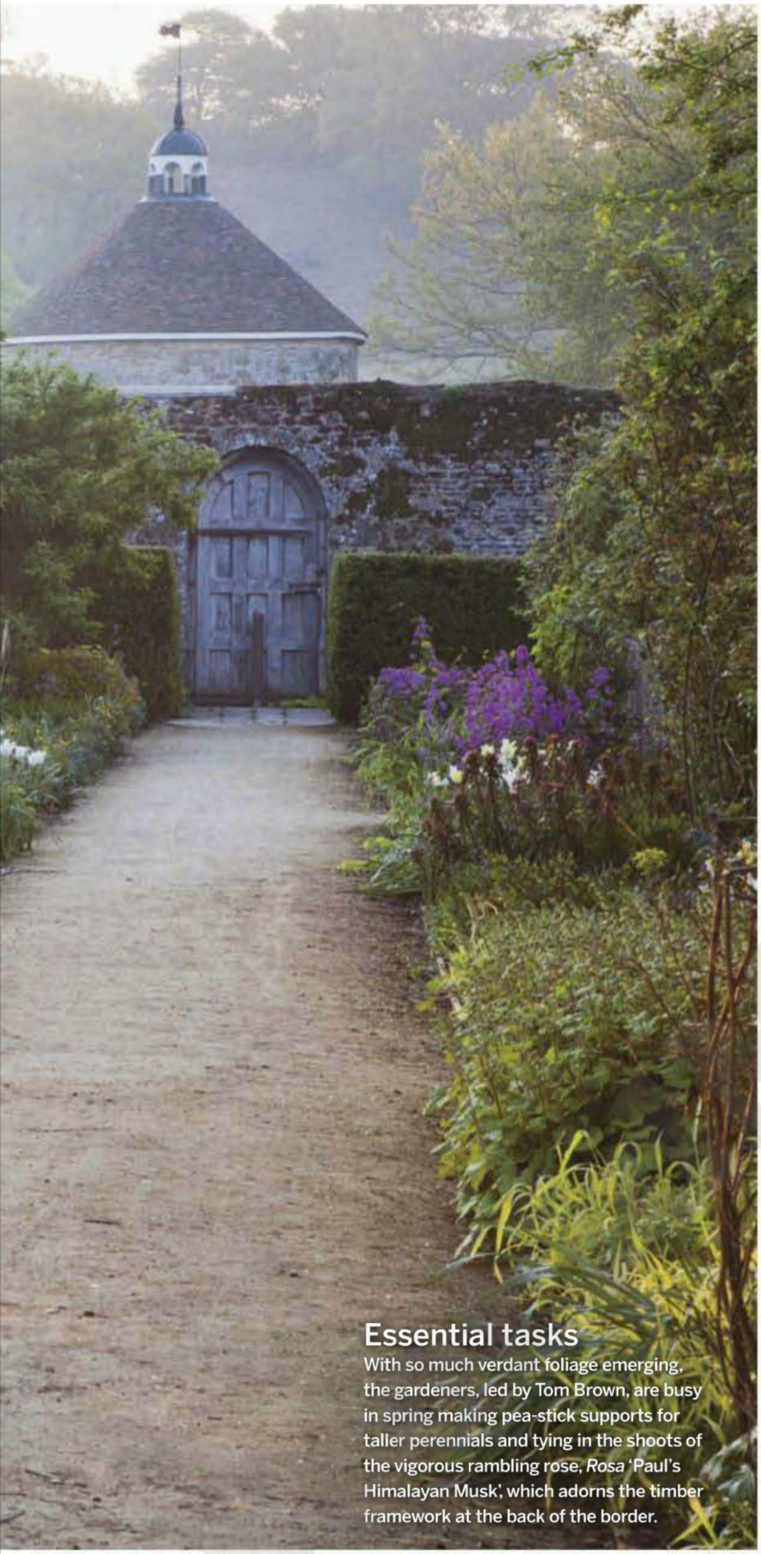
In brief

NAME **Parham House.**
WHAT **Elizabethan manor with grounds including a pleasure garden and an extensive walled garden.**
WHERE **Near Pulborough, West Sussex.**
SIZE **The walled garden is four acres.**
SOIL **Much improved greensand.**
CONDITIONS **In a frost pocket on low-lying ground in the northern lee of the South Downs.**
SPECIAL FEATURES **Colour-themed herbaceous borders.**
CONTACT **Parham House & Gardens, Storrington, near Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 4HS. For opening times, call 01903 742021 or see www.parhaminsussex.co.uk**



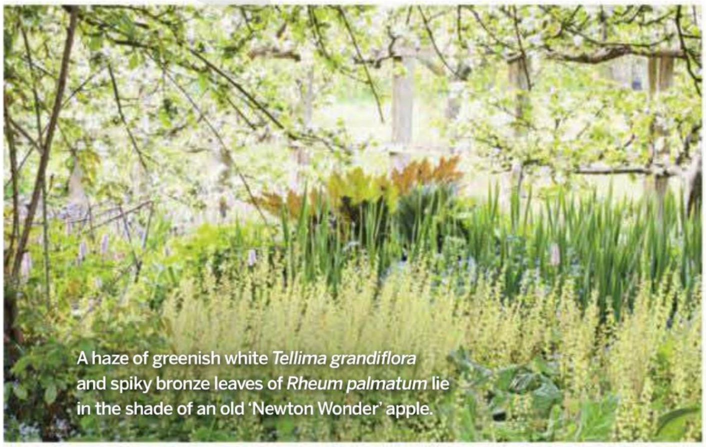
Elsewhere in the walled garden, apple trees frame the view along the 'Hot' border, which is divided by clipped box 'buttresses'.

The Lavender Garden comprises broad plantings of *Lavandula* 'Hidcote' divided by grass paths; blue camassias emerge from the lawn.

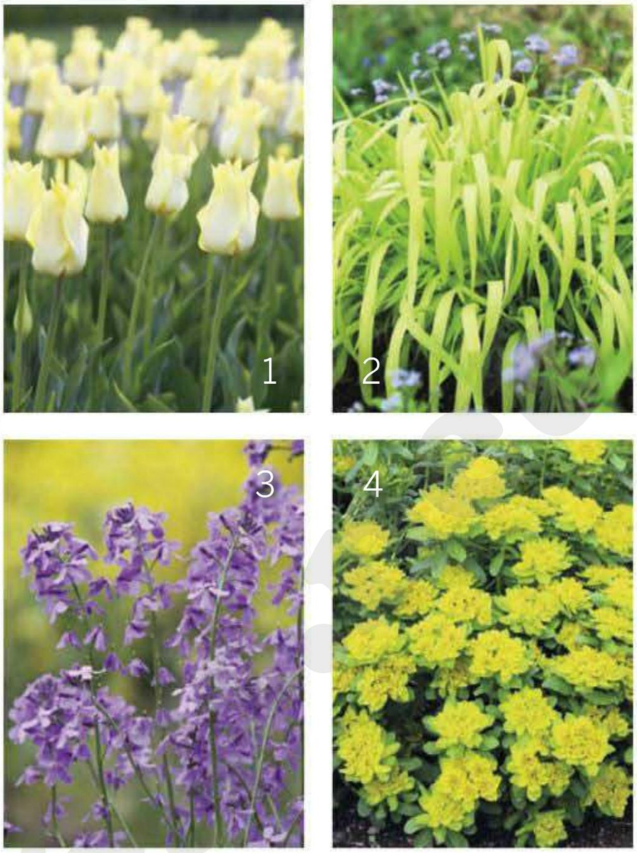


Essential tasks

With so much verdant foliage emerging, the gardeners, led by Tom Brown, are busy in spring making pea-stick supports for taller perennials and tying in the shoots of the vigorous rambling rose, *Rosa* 'Paul's Himalayan Musk', which adorns the timber framework at the back of the border.



A haze of greenish white *Tellima grandiflora* and spiky bronze leaves of *Rheum palmatum* lie in the shade of an old 'Newton Wonder' apple.



1 VISIONS / GAP PHOTOS, 2 RICHARD BLOOM GAP PHOTOS / GETTY IMAGES, 3 JULIE & VIC PIGULA / GAP PHOTOS, 4 MARTIN HUGH-JONES

KEY PLANTS
1 *Tulipa* 'Sapporo', 2 *Milium effusum* 'Aureum', 3 *Lunaria annua*, 4 *Euphorbia polychroma*

Spring

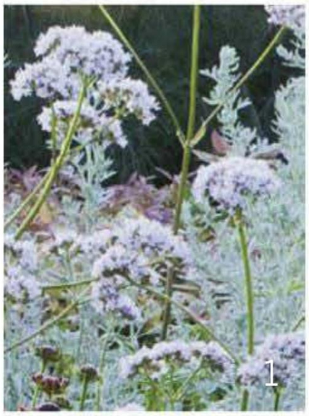
It may be called the Gold Border, but over the years the colours have evolved. In mid-spring purples, blues and silvers are important colours, too. The golds are confined to the acid yellow of Bowles's golden grass (*Milium effusum* 'Aureum') and zingy golden-yellow bracts of *E. polychroma*, which light up the border edges, as well as the dark-red tipped, greenish-gold young foliage of the shrub *Spiraea japonica* 'Bumalda'. Another euphorbia also provides an early highlight: *Euphorbia griffithii* 'Fireglow' shows plenty of deep colour in its burnt-red foliage. The filigree leaves of *Artemisia absinthium* 'Lambrook Mist' are a contrasting silver-blue. The fresh, emergent growth of perennials is interspersed with drifts of tulips such as cream *T.* 'Sapporo' and yellow 'Moonshine'. An old medlar tree (*Mespilus germanica*) guards the gate and forms a full stop to the 100m-long borders.

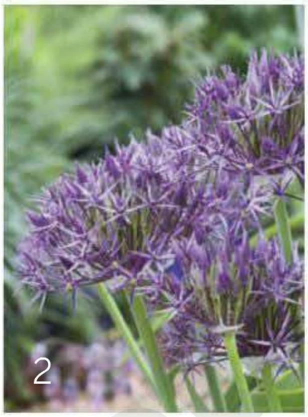
The garden walls and the landscape beyond are more evident now than ever. The absence of softening plants reveals the arrow-straightness of the path, which leads to an ancient, arch-topped gate in the wall and the restored dovecot beyond.

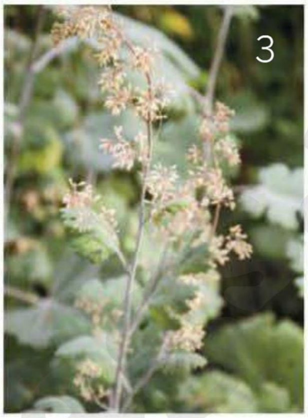
▷

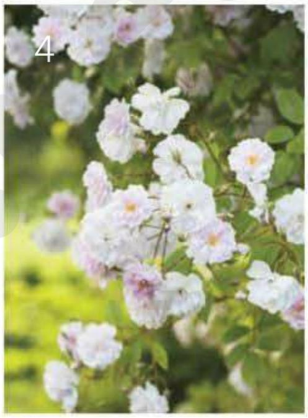
Blue *Echium vulgare* flowers in a lushly planted area to the rear of the glasshouse.

The old rose garden, pictured here last summer, has since been cleared and redesigned ready for planting to start this autumn.









KEY PLANTS
1 *Valeriana officinalis*, 2 *Allium cristophii*, 3 *Macleaya microcarpa* 'Kelway's Coral Plume', 4 *Rosa* 'Paul's Himalayan Musk'

2 HEATHER EDWARDS / GAP PHOTOS. 4 GAP PHOTOS

Essential tasks

Deadheading of spring-flowering perennials results in either a second flush of flower or strong, fresh foliage. Early staking and tying in of taller, floppier perennials now pays off as the plants will stand tall, without appearing to be trussed up.

Direct sowing in autumn ensures that the annual cut flower border is full of colour from early in the following season.

Summer

By June the once-dominant garden wall seems to recede behind the growing plants, as the trees inside the walled garden appear to merge with those outside. The hard line of the path is softened as the plants fill and brim over the timber board edge. Taller plants that do not require staking include the atypical poppy *Macleaya microcarpa* 'Kelway's Coral Plume' with its almost grass-like inflorescences of buff pink. The common valerian, *Valeriana officinalis*, lends a wild note to the border, not least thanks to its tendency to seed and wander at will.

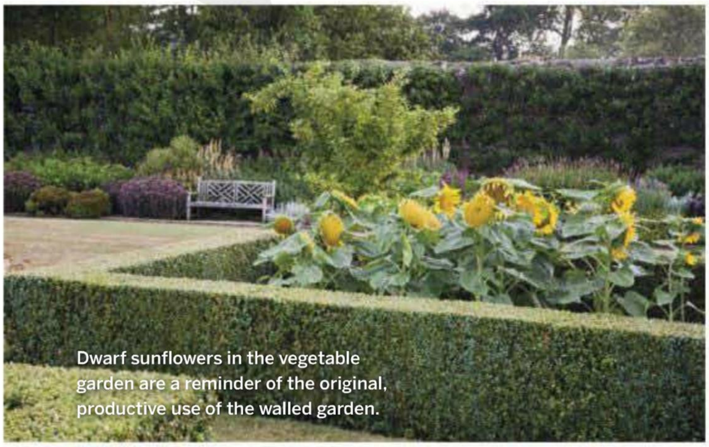
Along the line of the timber trellis frame, *Rosa* 'Paul's Himalayan Musk' is in full flower and filling the borders with its wonderful scent, made all the more potent and mysterious as the herbaceous plants in front almost completely obscure the roses from view. There is another advantage to this arrangement; as wonderful as 'Paul's Himalayan Musk' is, it is a one-hit wonder and in and out of flower in less than a month, so the density of the planting in front means it can remain hidden out of sight once its flowers have finished.

Every week in late summer the cutting borders contribute 20 bucketfuls of cut flowers for display in the house.

Globe thistles (*Echinops ritro*) match the blues of the Lavender Garden beyond, where un-mown, straw-coloured grass now grows in ribbons.

Essential tasks

Parham's gardeners keep the gardens looking as colourful as possible by adding direct-sown annuals and tender, late-flowering plants such as dahlias. During very dry periods, targeted irrigation can help to prolong the flowering season of many plants, whether annuals and perennials. Finally, spent flowers that have no aesthetic value are removed, while those that will look interesting into autumn and beyond are retained.



Dwarf sunflowers in the vegetable garden are a reminder of the original, productive use of the walled garden.

1 MARK BOLTON GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY / GETTY IMAGES, 3 ZENA ELEA / ALAMY, 4 FHF GREENMEDIA / GAP PHOTOS

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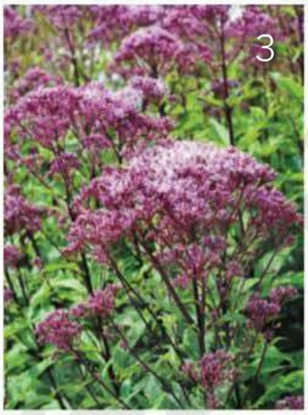

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KEY PLANTS
1 *Coreopsis verticillata* 'Grandiflora', 2 *Helenium* 'Moerheim Beauty',
3 *Eupatorium maculatum* Atropurpureum Group,
4 *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum'

Late summer

The borders are now in their prime, at the peak of growth. One of the most notable aspects of the borders at this time of year is that the depth of the beds – around 8m – allows plants to be organised in a definite height hierarchy, and enables plants of real stature to be included in the mix. The result creates an enveloping fullness to the planting in layers, and this softening of lines causes the straight pathway to almost become a meandering track.

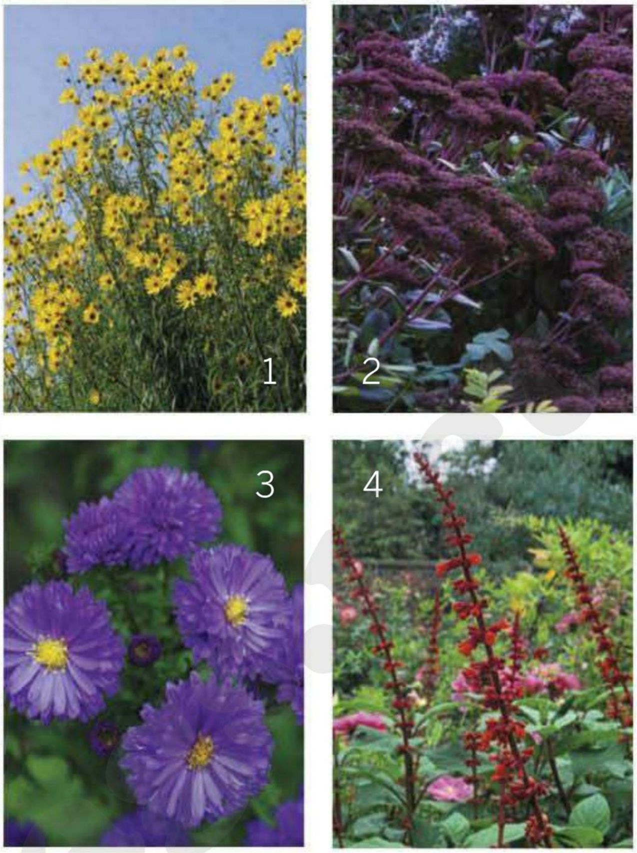
One of the key plants in late summer is *Helianthus salicifolius*, the 'willow-leaved' sunflower. This is an impressively statuesque perennial grown primarily for its attractive, fine, willow-like leaves held on tall, thin stems. The fat purple-pink umbels of *Eupatorium maculatum* Atropurpureum Group appear in large clumps at the back of the border, the shape and colour of the flowers loosely reflected in *Sedum* 'Matrona' at the front. The *Eupatorium* is a great plant for instilling a wilder, less cultivated look to a border, not least as despite being tall it rarely requires staking, and the same applies to bronze fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum'), which in flower has the feel of early summer cow parsley and country lane verges. In the middle of the border *Helenium* 'Riverton Beauty' flowers from mid-August until the first frosts. Its bright yellow blooms are echoed in *Coreopsis verticillata* 'Grandiflora', used as edging, which flowers from July to September.

The entrance border on the way in to the walled garden is richly planted and features specimens of mature *Cotinus coggygria* 'Royal Purple'.

Nicotiana mutabilis planted with winter squash makes a bold and unusual late season pairing in the walled garden.

Essential tasks

The gardeners allow the perennials to stand for as long as possible, while they still look interesting and presentable. Autumn is a key time for assessing the successes and failures of the preceding season, and gardener Peta Ashton will often bring out new plants from the nursery to try in the borders at this time. It's also time to lift tulips and plant new bulbs for next season.



1 STEFFEN HAUSER / BOTANIKFOTO / ALAMY , 3 PAUL PICTON, OLD COURT NURSERIES, 4 TREVOR NICHOLSON CHRISTIE / GAP PHOTOS

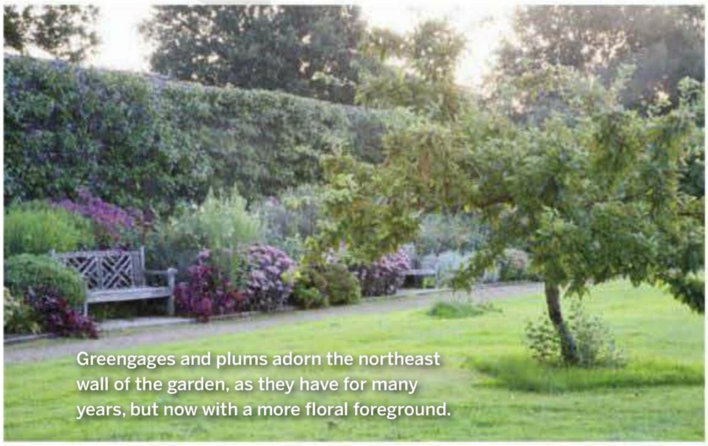
KEY PLANTS
1 *Helianthus salicifolius*, 2 *Sedum* 'Matrona',
3 *Aster novi-belgii* 'Gurney Slade', 4 *Salvia confertiflora*

Autumn

▷ As summer perennials go over and fade into the background, they still have a part to play in the shape and presence of the borders. The plumpness has gone from the flower heads of *Eupatorium* but the strong stems play a structural role in the border and the developing fluffy seedheads look interesting. Even the midsummer-flowering *Stipa gigantea* still offers much, the stems and seedheads retaining their golden yellow colouring.

The onset of autumn and shortening day-lengths initiates flowering for late-season perennials such as asters and rudbeckias, along with the golden yellow blooms of *Helianthus salicifolius*, which now crown the tall, willow-leaved stems. The clumps of *Sedum* 'Matrona' have taken on their dark burgundy autumn colour, which is visible in repetition down the length of the border, alongside other edging plants such as mauve-pink *Aster novi-belgii* 'Little Pink Beauty' and purple-blue *A. novi-belgii* 'Gurney Slade'.

Many of the hardy perennials have finished flowering and their foliage is looking tired, but tender perennials and annuals continue to provide fresh foliage and flowers. *Salvia confertiflora* bears tall spires of dark, bright red, furry flowers that peak in autumn and continue until the first frosts. ☐



Greengages and plums adorn the northeast wall of the garden, as they have for many years, but now with a more floral foreground.

In brief

NAME **Gable House.**
WHAT **Plantsman's private garden.**
WHERE **Suffolk.**
SIZE **One acre.**
SOIL **Clay and loam.**
CONDITIONS **South-facing, low rainfall.**
SPECIAL FEATURES **Year-round interest, with collections of cyclamen, hellebores and snowdrops outstanding in late winter and early spring.**

As a boy John Foster often visited the London garden of the great plantsman EA Bowles, and he now grows many of Bowles's favourite plants, such as *Crocus tommasinianus* 'Bobbo'.

The colour of spring

In John and Brenda Foster's south-facing garden, the new season arrives early, carpeting the ground with an exquisite collection of bright flowers

WORDS **VAL BOURNE** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARIANNE MAJERUS**

The Fosters have spent more than 40 years weaving the tapestry of plants that now fill the garden with colour in late winter, including elegant, pretty *Helleborus* x *hybridus*.

Dark glossy leaves and pale green flowers of *Helleborus foetidus* bloom against a background of snowdrops and yellow winter aconites (*Eranthis hyemalis*).

> *"Aconites, snowdrops, crocuses, wood anemones and hellebores thrive here, close to trees and hedges John and Brenda planted as saplings or seedlings"*

Gable House springs to life early in the year with a carpet of spring bulbs and woodland plants. Its owners John and Brenda Foster have gardened in this quiet part of rural Suffolk all their married life. Their one-acre plot, planted for year-round interest, warms up early in the year because it slopes gradually from north to south, catching all the sun. Aconites, snowdrops, crocuses, wood anemones and hellebores thrive here, close to trees and hedges that John and Brenda planted as saplings or seedlings when they first moved here as newlyweds in 1965.

This industrious couple, both confirmed plantaholics, have had to work hard at the heavy clay soil on one side of their garden, adding compost and leaf mould. Fortunately the other side – once an orchard – had a foot of good topsoil, enriched by hundreds of years of leaf litter.

Snowdrops do well in the dry summers of Suffolk, where the average rainfall is between 64cm and 75cm a year. "They like a good dry summer's rest," John tells me. "Constant wet is no good to them at all."

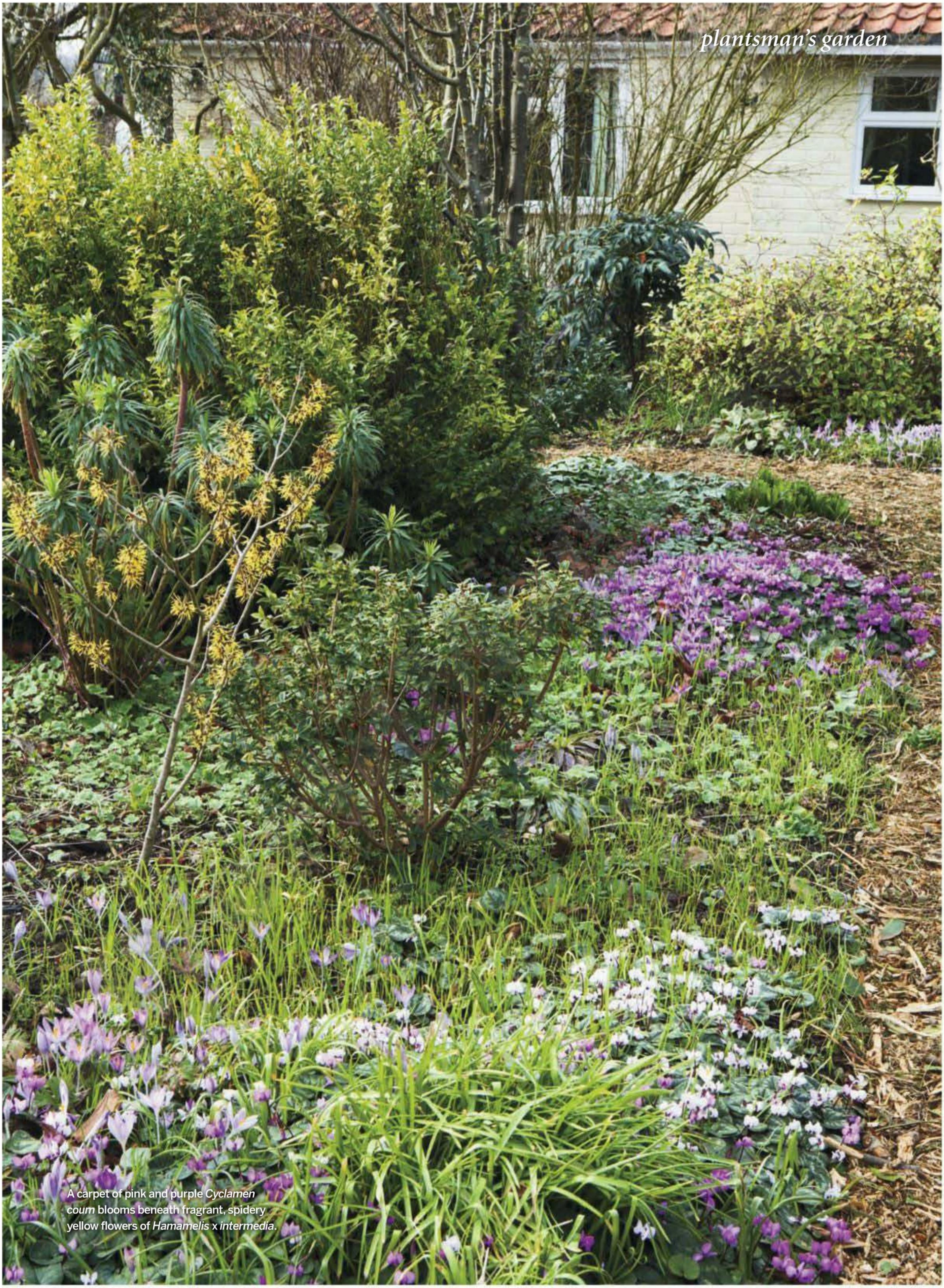
A passion kindled

John, who was a shopkeeper in Beccles for many years, has been a galanthophile since the 1970s. His passion began when he started selling bunches of snowdrops brought in by Lady Priscilla Bacon of Raveningham Hall. "She was an avid collector with a hundred or so varieties and was in contact with the leading galanthophiles of her day." Priscilla's posies contained two snowdrops – 'S. Arnott' and 'Atkinsii' – and John admired both. "I bought 'Dionysus', S. Arnott' and 'Lady Beatrix Stanley' from Priscilla and it went on from there," he explains. He now grows the fine plicate snowdrop named in her honour, 'Priscilla Bacon'. John also acquired snowdrops from another near neighbour, John Morley [see issue 170], an artist who was friendly with Sir Cedric Morris.

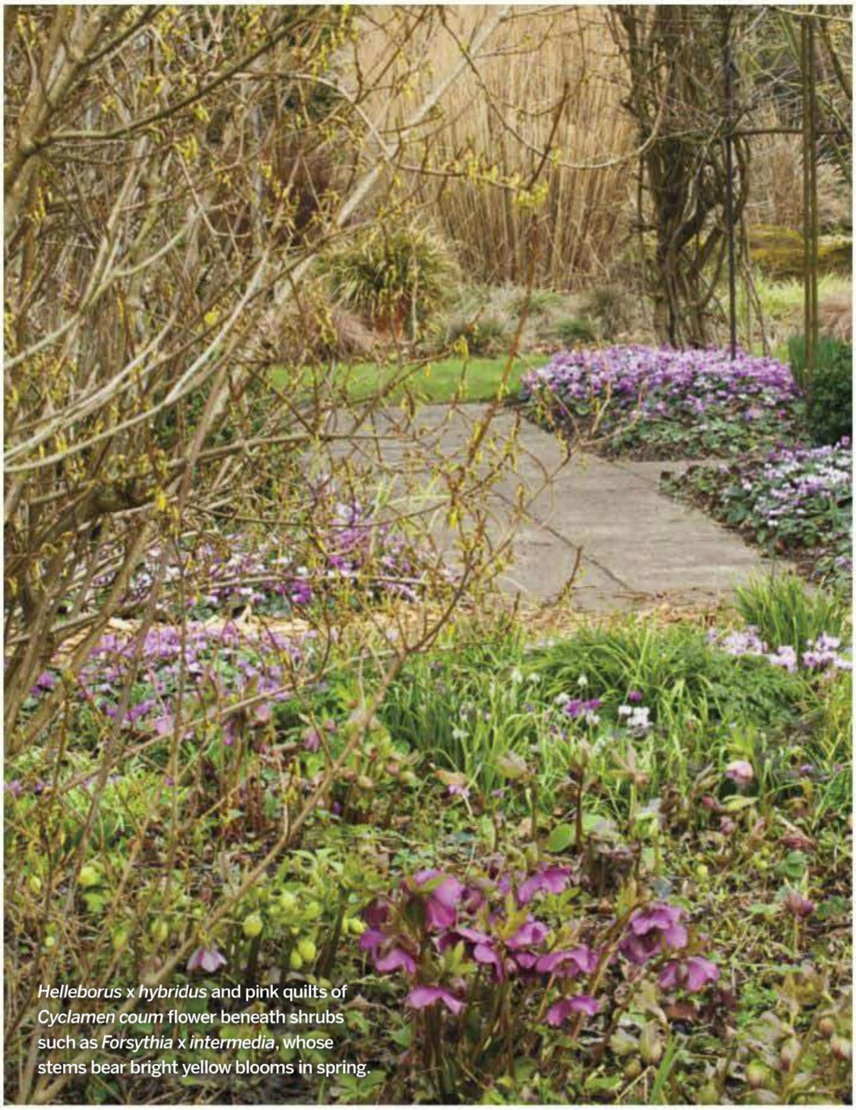
John was probably destined to garden, because his father was a keen vegetable grower. As a young boy he lived in Enfield in Middlesex, and while there he met the greatest galanthophile of them all – Edward Augustus Bowles of Myddelton House. "My father was a member of the local gardening club [The Forty Hill Mutual Improvement Horticultural Society] and 'Gussie' Bowles was president. He had several open days a year and we used to go there often in the years following the war." Gussie, commemorated by the plicate snowdrop 'Augustus', was quite a character. "Even in old age he could be seen in the pond raking out the mud." John recalled. "He used to take us all upstairs into the rooms where he kept his collections of plants, animals and insects."

Paying tribute

John has sought out plants associated with Bowles. *Narcissus* 'Bowles's Early Sulphur' flowers here in February and is small and ▷



A carpet of pink and purple *Cyclamen coum* blooms beneath fragrant, spidery yellow flowers of *Hamamelis* x *intermedia*.



Helleborus x *hybridus* and pink quilts of *Cyclamen coum* flower beneath shrubs such as *Forsythia* x *intermedia*, whose stems bear bright yellow blooms in spring.

▷ perfectly formed so it doesn't overpower the snowdrops. You cannot fail to spot *Crocus tommasinianus* 'Bobbo' either: this slender-necked crocus (pictured on page 52) has lavender-purple flowers tipped with white. Bobbo was one of Bowles's boys, as his local helpers were called, and he spotted it growing among a sea of ordinary 'tommies'. These grow in profusion all along the beech hedge. Bowles also loved weird and wonderful plants, so much so that part of his garden was called the Lunatic Asylum. There are some weird 'spikies' among John's snowdrop collection with petals that stick out at odd angles. *Galanthus nivalis* 'Walrus' does well here, but John also admires *G.* 'Irish Green' for its claw-like green and white flowers.

"The planting style is naturalistic here," John tells me. "I don't like formality and the garden is planted in layers. At the base we have bulbous plants that come through in the early spring through summer-flowering perennials. We have shrubs too." Some of the latter, such as *Sarcococca confusa* and witch hazels (cultivars of *Hamamelis* x *intermedia*, including 'Pallida', 'Diane' and 'Jelena'), flower with the bulbs. 'Diane' and 'Jelena' also colour up well in autumn. Trees provide John's top layer of planting, including *Ginkgo biloba* and *Liquidambar styraciflua*. In autumn, right through to early winter, the golden yellow foliage of the ginkgo and the plum red of the liquidambar light up the garden, so Gable House delights the senses in every season. ◻

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS Gable House, Redisham, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 8NE. OPEN 19 February, 11am to 4pm; 3 June, 11am to 5pm (NGS); 2 September 11am-5pm (with bulb sale). Also open by appointment. TEL 01502 575298.

Flowers for late winter and early spring

From the Fosters' garden

1 *Helleborus* x *sternii*
Bulmer's blush strain
A dainty, slow-growing hybrid hellebore for a warm spot, although it will tolerate some shade. Blush-pink buds and chartreuse-green flowers that fade to a dusky rose. Marbled, serrated foliage; red stems.

2 *Galanthus* 'Lady Beatrix Stanley'
One of best doubles and a really good doer that bulks up well. Large, wide flowers in January. Always looks open, even on the greyest winter's day. Fine dotted markings on the outer frill.

3 *Narcissus* 'Dawn Chorus'
Miniature narcissi make wonderful partners: their size enhances the snowdrops rather than dominating them. 'Dawn Chorus' is hard to find, but 'Jumblie' (a small all-yellow with swept-back petals) is readily available. Both flower in March.

4 *Crocus tommasinianus*
This rampant self-seeder sweeps through whole areas when happy, so not for those who object to the natural look. The slender necks of 'tommies' open their ruby-red, purple and lavender-mauve goblets early.

5 *Iris* 'Katharine Hodgkin'
This amenable, compact hybrid iris pushes through the ground early, before producing a tight clump of sea-blue flowers streaked and splashed in jaunty yellow and indigo blue. Raised by EB Anderson in 1955.

6 *Eranthis hyemalis*
The winter aconite, early and jaunty, needs a sunny position because its flowers refuse to open to pollinators unless the temperature reaches 10ºC.

7 *Galanthus nivalis* 'Ray Cobb'
A vigorous single yellow snowdrop named by John after a snowdrop collector who found many yellow forms of *G. nivalis* in Northumberland. It flowers profusely and produces lots of offspring. Short but much more vigorous than most yellows.

8 *Cyclamen coum*
Rounded leaves, often with a silver sheen, support short-stemmed, magenta-nosed flowers in profusion. Self-seeds with the help of ants, which roll the seeds around as they lick the sticky coating. Likes sunshine.

2 MARIANNE MAJERUS PICTURE LIBRARY; 6 RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS

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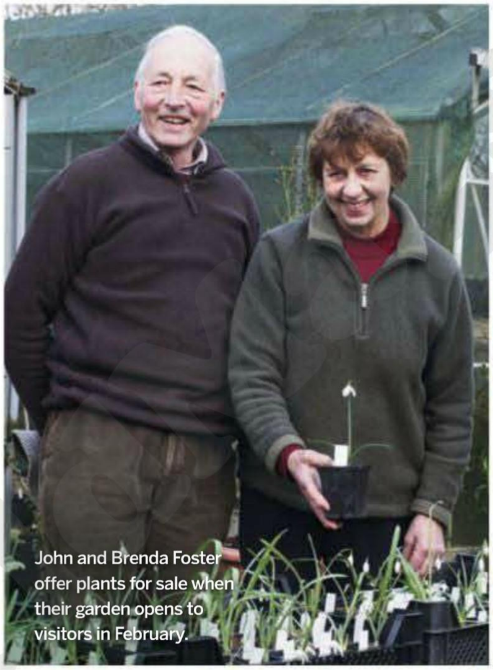
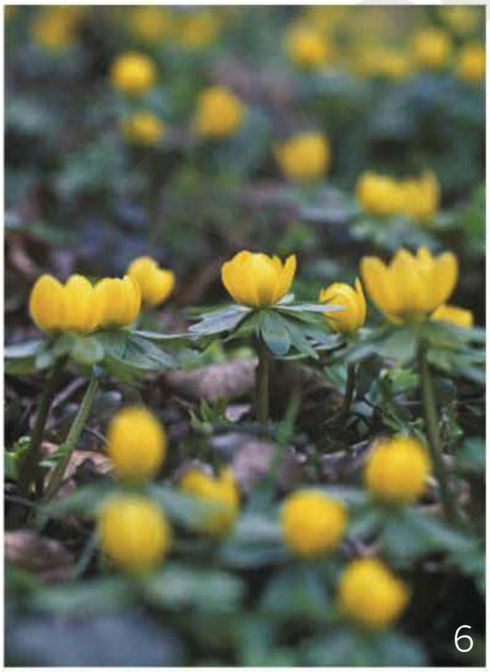

John and Brenda Foster offer plants for sale when their garden opens to visitors in February.

5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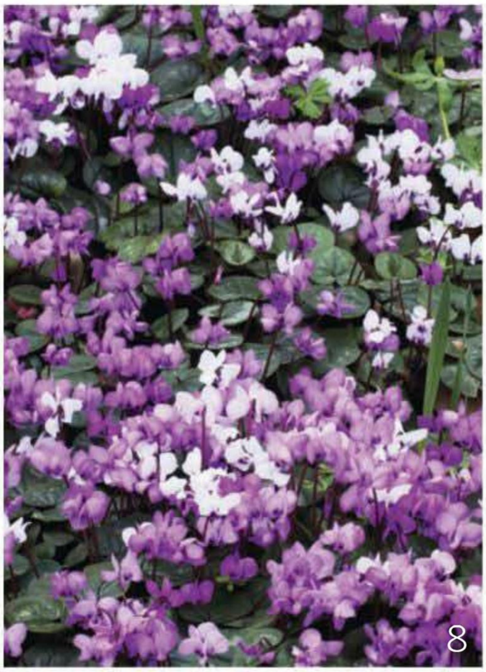
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Daphne

They are famous for filling winter gardens with scent, but choose the right daphnes and you can have fragrance all year round

WORDS **ROY LANCASTER**

In brief

WHAT **Genus of around 70 species of scented flowering shrubs, from the *Thymelaeaceae* family.**

COMMON NAME **Most are simply known as daphnes.**

ORIGINS **Mainly temperate regions of Europe and Asia in woods, mountains and stony slopes, depending on species.**

SEASON **Winter, spring or early summer-flowering.**

SIZE **From prostrate and hummock-forming to 3m+, depending on species.**

CONDITIONS **Full sun or light shade. Generally moist but free-draining soil.**

***DAPHNE BHOLUA* 'JACQUELINE POSTILL'** Strong growing and erect, evergreen wavy-edged leaves, richly scented, pink and rose-purple flowers from January to March. Sun or light shade, appreciates some shelter. Moist but well-drained soil. H 2-3m. AGM

FHF GREENMEDIA / GAP PHOTOS

Roy Lancaster is a plantsman, writer, lecturer and broadcaster

I cannot remember having a garden that did not contain at least one *Daphne*. In my present garden I grow 12, each one of which earns its place for the pleasure it gives in its flowers, fragrance or foliage, sometimes all three. If you were to believe the pessimists who say that daphnes are likely to die on you without warning, it would be to deny yourself one the great joys of gardening.

It is true that some daphnes have special growing requirements if they are to perform well and are therefore more attractive to those who love a challenge. True, also, that a few species, notably our native *D. mezereum*, are susceptible to viruses, but this is not inevitable and should not deter gardeners from planting them. The good news is that among the 70 or more species of daphnes, and a greater number of cultivars and hybrids, there is a wealth of first class and reliable shrubs for the garden.

They range from carpeting and hummock-forming shrubs suitable for rock gardens, raised beds and troughs to strong-growing, lush-foliaged individuals up to 3m or more tall for borders, beds and special places. Their small flowers, borne in conspicuous, dense clusters, have no petals but a four-lobed calyx. This ranges in colour, depending on species, from white through pink, rose and purple to yellow. Most are possessed of a delicious fragrance.

Depending on species, flowers are usually produced in winter, spring or summer. All are capable of producing red or blue-black, berry-like fruit after flowering, though these are not always freely borne in cultivation. Given that flowers are normally their most ornamental gift to gardeners, I shall briefly review a selection of my favourites in order of season.

Winter-flowering

The deciduous mezereon, *D. mezereum* (page 60), was the first species I ever grew and it is still a personal favourite. *D. mezereum* is one of only two species found wild in Britain. The other is *D. laureola*, another small upright shrub differing in its large evergreen leaves, beneath which, in February and March,

▷

▷ dense clusters of small, green flowers are borne. An even better form is *D. laureola* 'Margaret Mathew' (page 63).

Small again and evergreen is *D. odora* (below right), with fragrant clusters of pink flowers. 'Mae-jima' (right) is a variegated cultivar that makes it an excellent container plant for the patio or conservatory.

The most popular winter flowering daphnes are forms of *D. bholua*. This is an erect-growing shrub capable of heights up to 4m. The evergreen 'Jacqueline Postill' (page 58) bears clusters of richly fragrant flowers; 'Darjeeling' (page 65) bears blooms that open as early as November.

Spring flowering

More daphnes flower at this season than in any other and they represent some of the loveliest species and hybrids, particularly those suited to the smaller garden. One of the most widely and easily grown is *D. tangutica* (page 64). Another reliable 'old timer' in gardens is *D.* x *napolitana* (page 64), which is drought tolerant and suitable for a large rock garden or raised bed in sun. Another sun lover, recently introduced, is *D.* x *transatlantica* Eternal Fragrance (='Blafra'; see page 64). *D. acutiloba* 'Fragrant Cloud' (page 63) is a taller, upright evergreen. Totally different is *D. jezoensis* (opposite), which I once saw flowering in a woodland in the mountains of Japan. *D. pontica* (page 62) is an excellent shrub for light shade.

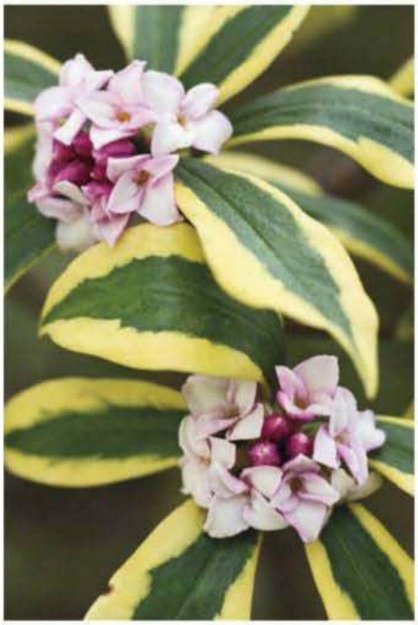
Summer flowering

There are a number of daphnes in this category, including some of those already mentioned, which produce their main flush in spring. My favourites, however, are the two selections of the hybrid *Daphne* x *burkwoodii*, 'Somerset' (page 64) and 'Albert Burkwood', both of which are relatively long-lived and popular with gardeners for their compact domed or rounded, semi-evergreen habit to 1m (1.5m in the case of 'Somerset') and freely borne, sweetly scented flowers all summer.

• Roy's choice of favourite daphnes continues over the next five pages.

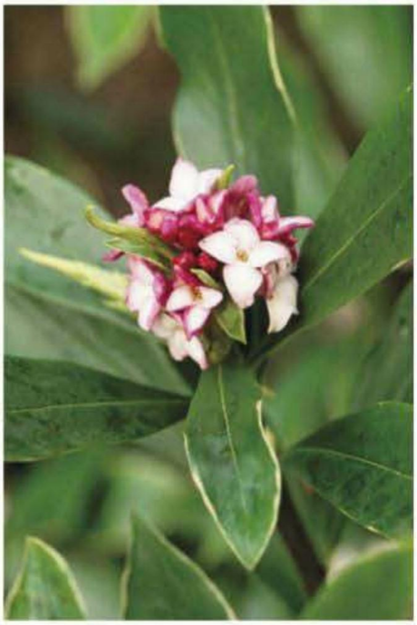
▷

Daphnes for winter & early spring



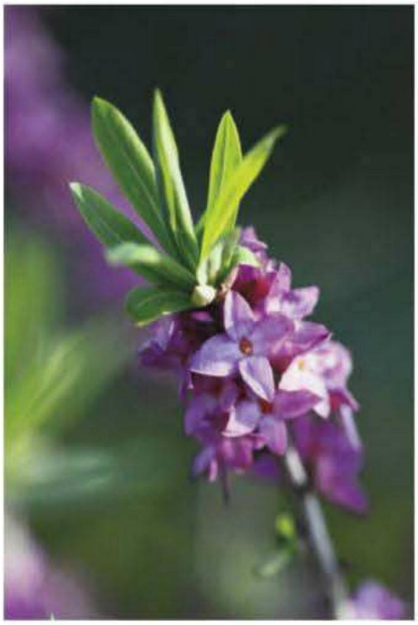
RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS

DAPHNE ODORA **'MAE-JIMA'**
One of the brightest and most reliable variegated daphnes. It needs a warm, sheltered, sunny situation in a moist but well-drained soil, or a conservatory. H 1-1.2m. AGM.



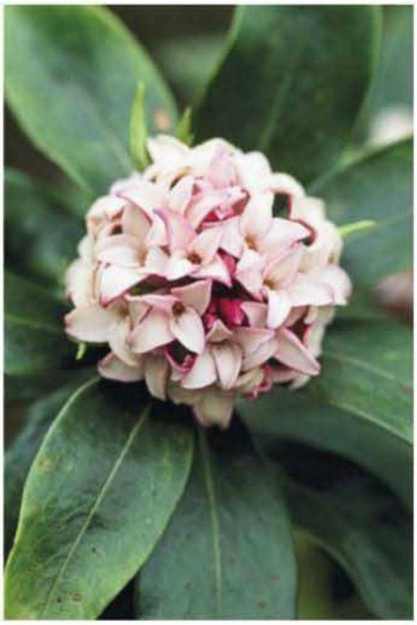
JO WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS

D. ODORA **'WALBERTON'**
A superior sport of 'Aureomarginata' with larger heads of scented flowers in late winter. For a warm, sunny, sheltered situation in moist but well-drained soil. H 1m-1.2m



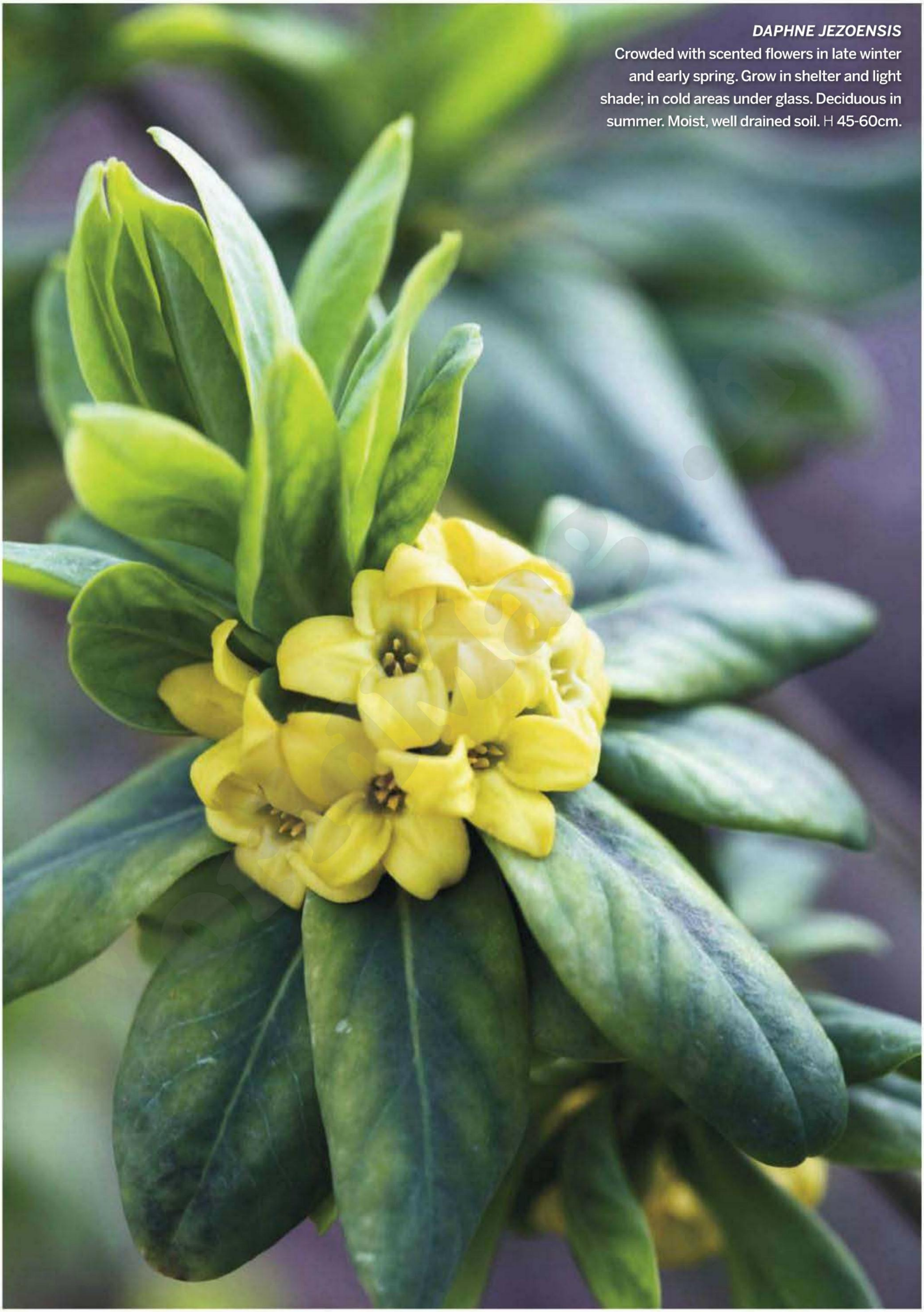
MARTIN STAFFLER / GAP PHOTOS

D. MEZEREUM
Hardy, deciduous and upright in habit. Scented flowers on leafless shoots in February or March. Sun or light shade, moist but well-drained, especially alkaline soil. H 1.2m



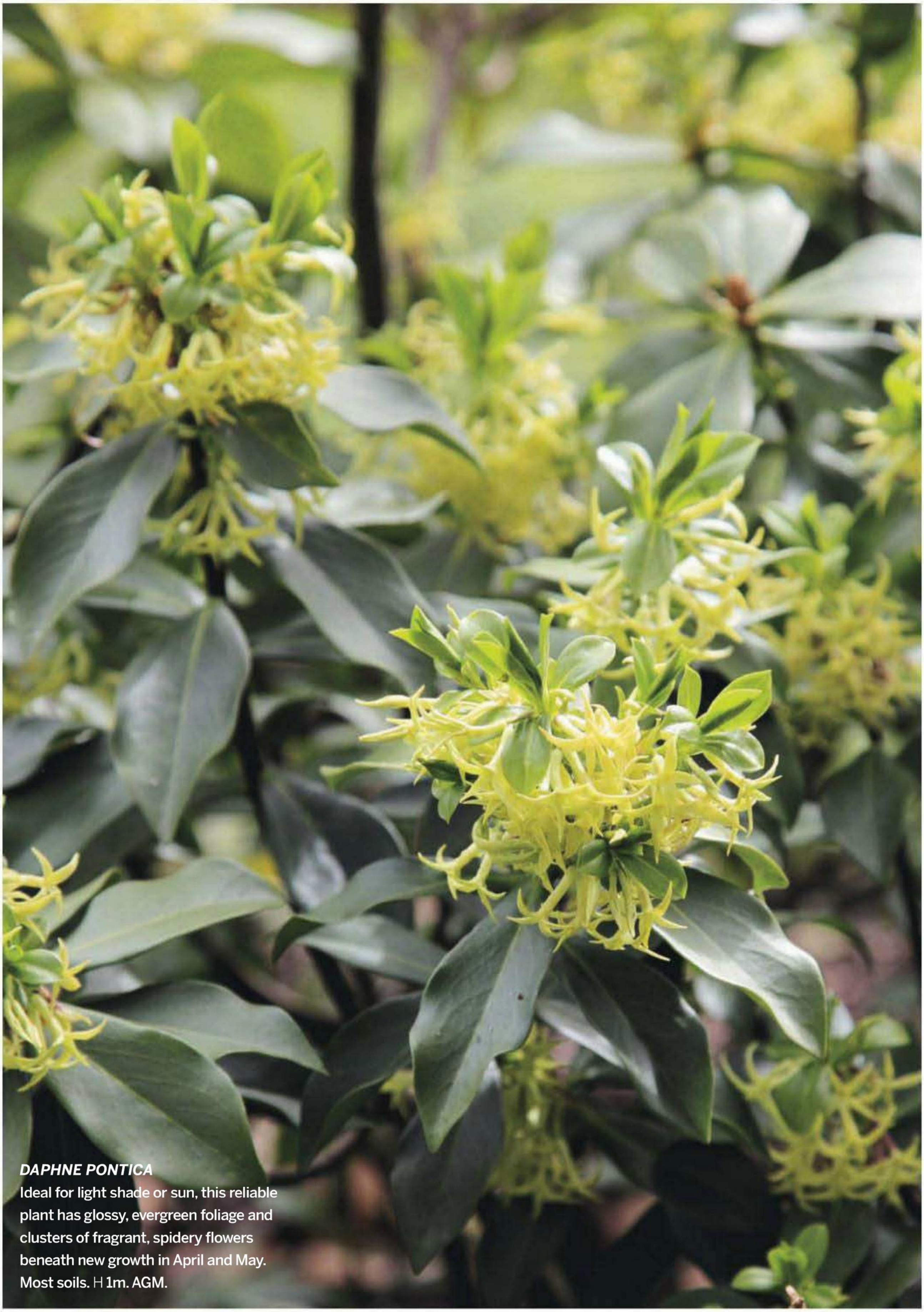
HOWARD RICE / GAP PHOTOS

D. ODORA
Small evergreen shrub famed for its richly fragrant flowers in clusters in February and March. Requires a warm, sheltered spot and moist but well-drained soil. Sun. H 1.2m



DAPHNE JEZOENSIS
Crowded with scented flowers in late winter and early spring. Grow in shelter and light shade; in cold areas under glass. Deciduous in summer. Moist, well drained soil. H 45-60cm.

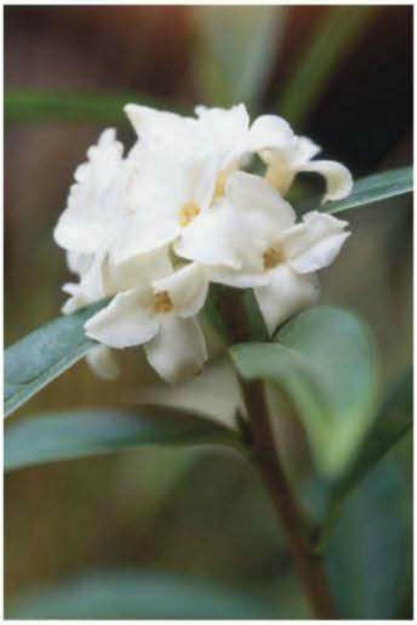
LYNN KEDDIE / GAP PHOTOS



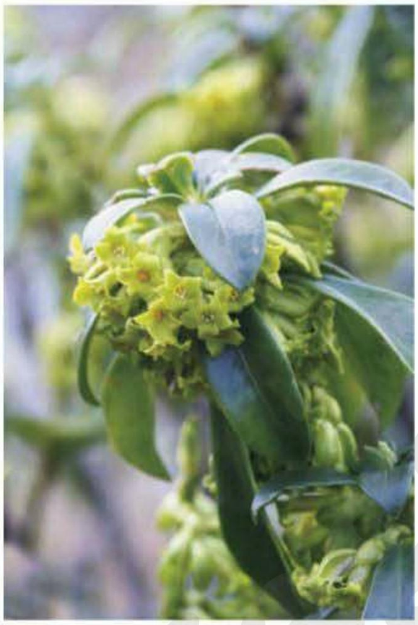
DAPHNE PONTICA
Ideal for light shade or sun, this reliable plant has glossy, evergreen foliage and clusters of fragrant, spidery flowers beneath new growth in April and May. Most soils. H 1m. AGM.

MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS

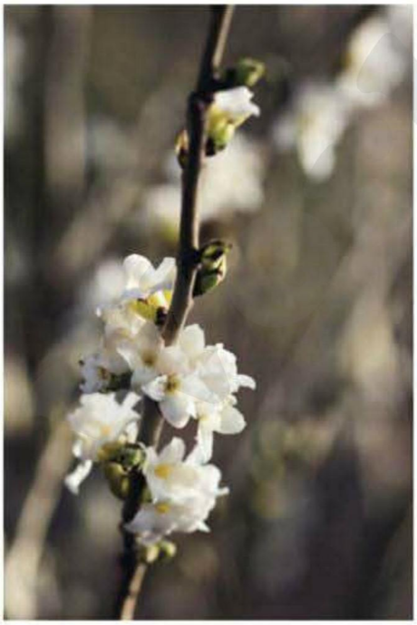
Daphnes for late winter & spring


ANNE GREEN-ARMYTAGE / GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY / GETTY IMAGES

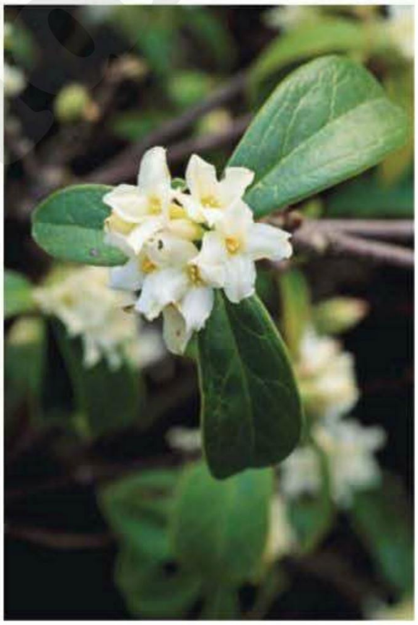
DAPHNE BHOLUA 'ALBA'
Erect evergreen with relatively narrow, glossy leaves. The best forms have pure white, fragrant flowers, January to March. Sun or light shade, moist but well-drained soil. H 2m-3m.


FHF GREENMEDIA / GAP PHOTOS

D. LAUREOLA 'MARGARET MATHEW'
Erect to spreading stems are well clothed with rich green foliage. Honey-scented flowers in February and March. Sun or light shade, moist especially alkaline soils. H 1m-1.2m.


LYNN KEDDIE / GAP PHOTOS

***D. MEZEREUM* 'BOWLES'S WHITE'**
Scented white flowers in late winter and early spring, followed by amber-coloured fruits. Grow this plant alone or with the pink *D. mezereum* (see page 60). H 1.3m.


GFK-FLORA / ALAMY

***D. ACUTILOBA* 'FRAGRANT CLOUD'**
Evergreen, upright shrub with scented flowers in April and sometimes again later. Early flowers need protection from late frosts. Light shade, moist but well-drained soil. H 1.2m.

Growing daphnes

SOIL

The majority of the daphnes described here will grow in average garden soil, whether acidic or alkaline. What is more important is moisture availability in summer. Healthy growth is encouraged by the oft quoted 'moist but well-drained conditions', avoiding, of course, the extremes of wet and dry, which may result in stress if not worse.

ASPECT

Care should be taken in choosing suitable positions for those daphnes with a preference for sun or light shade as well as warmth and shelter.

POSITION

In my experience, established daphnes dislike having their root systems disturbed, so take extra time in considering where to plant. Avoid planting where tree roots compete.

WHEN TO PLANT

Fortunately, daphnes are normally available container-grown, which means they can be planted when required, though I favour autumn or late spring (after frost).

AFTER PLANTING

Providing you take account of all the considerations above, I see no need for artificial fertilisers to encourage growth. I do approve, though, of adding an organic mulch to those of the stronger growing *Daphne bholua* cultivars and hybrids, especially when grown on a sandy or alkaline soil.

For spring & summer, into autumn & winter

Where to Buy

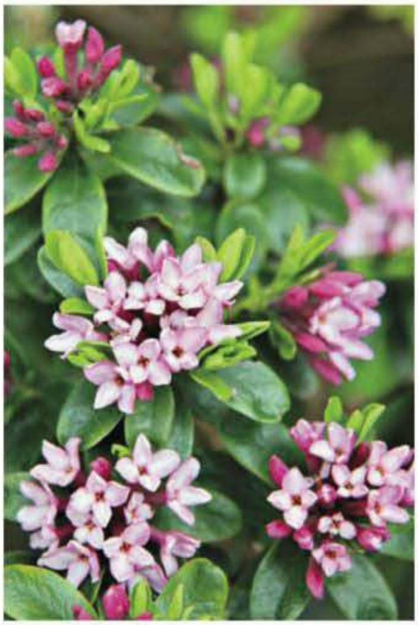
- Charleshurst Farm Nurseries, Loxwood Road, Plaistow, Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 0NY. Tel 01403 752273, www.charleshurstplants.co.uk
- Junker's Nursery. Visits by appointment only. Higher Cobhay, Milverton, Somerset TA4 1NJ. Tel 01823 400075, www.junker.co.uk
- Larch Cottage Nurseries, Melkinthorpe, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 2DR. Tel 01931 712404, www.larchcottage.co.uk
- Wildside Nursery, Green Lane, Buckland Monachorum, Devon PL20 7NP. Tel 01822 855755, www.wileyatwildside.com
- Wisley Plant Centre, RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. Tel 01483 211113, www.rhs.org.uk/wisleyplantcentre

Where to see daphnes

- National Collection – Michael Baron, Brandy Mount House, Alresford, Hampshire SO24 9EG. Tel 01962 732189, www.brandymount.co.uk
- RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. Tel 0845 260 9000, www.rhs.org.uk/Gardens/Wisley
- The Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, Jermyns Lane, Ampfield, near Romsey, Hampshire SO51 0QA. Tel 01794 369317, www.hilliergardens.org.uk
- Wildside Gardens, Buckland Monachorum (for details see *Where to buy*, above).

More about daphnes

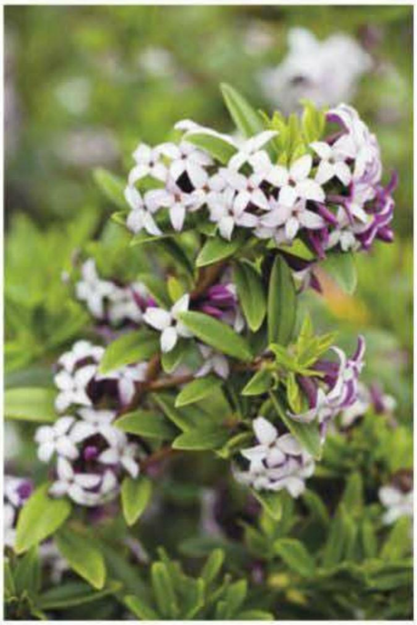
Daphnes – A Practical Guide for Gardeners by Robin White (Timber Press, 2006) is the best guide to growing daphnes, by an acknowledged expert. Well illustrated.



MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS

DAPHNE* x *NAPOLITANA

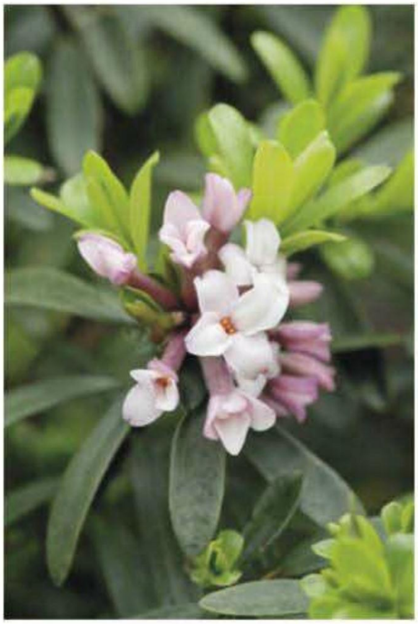
Reliable, low evergreen mound covered with clusters of fragrant flowers, April to June. Sun-loving; suited to rock garden or raised bed in moist but well-drained soil. H 1m. AGM.



GAP PHOTOS

D. TANGUTICA

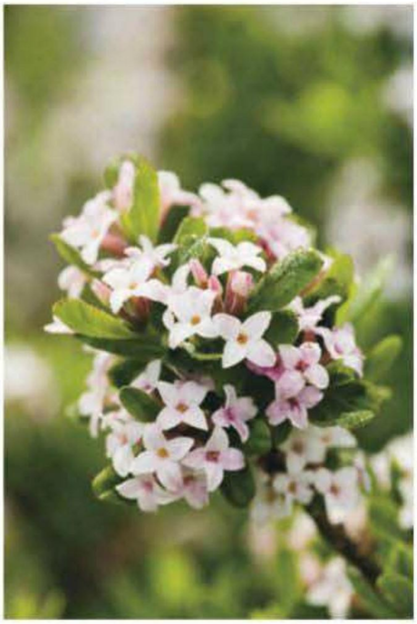
Compact evergreen with scented flowers in spring and summer. Red fruits. Suitable for rock garden or bed in sun or light shade. Moist, well-drained soil. H 1-1.3m. AGM.



JO WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS

***D.* x *TRANSATLANTICA* ETERNAL FRAGRANCE (='BLAFRA')**

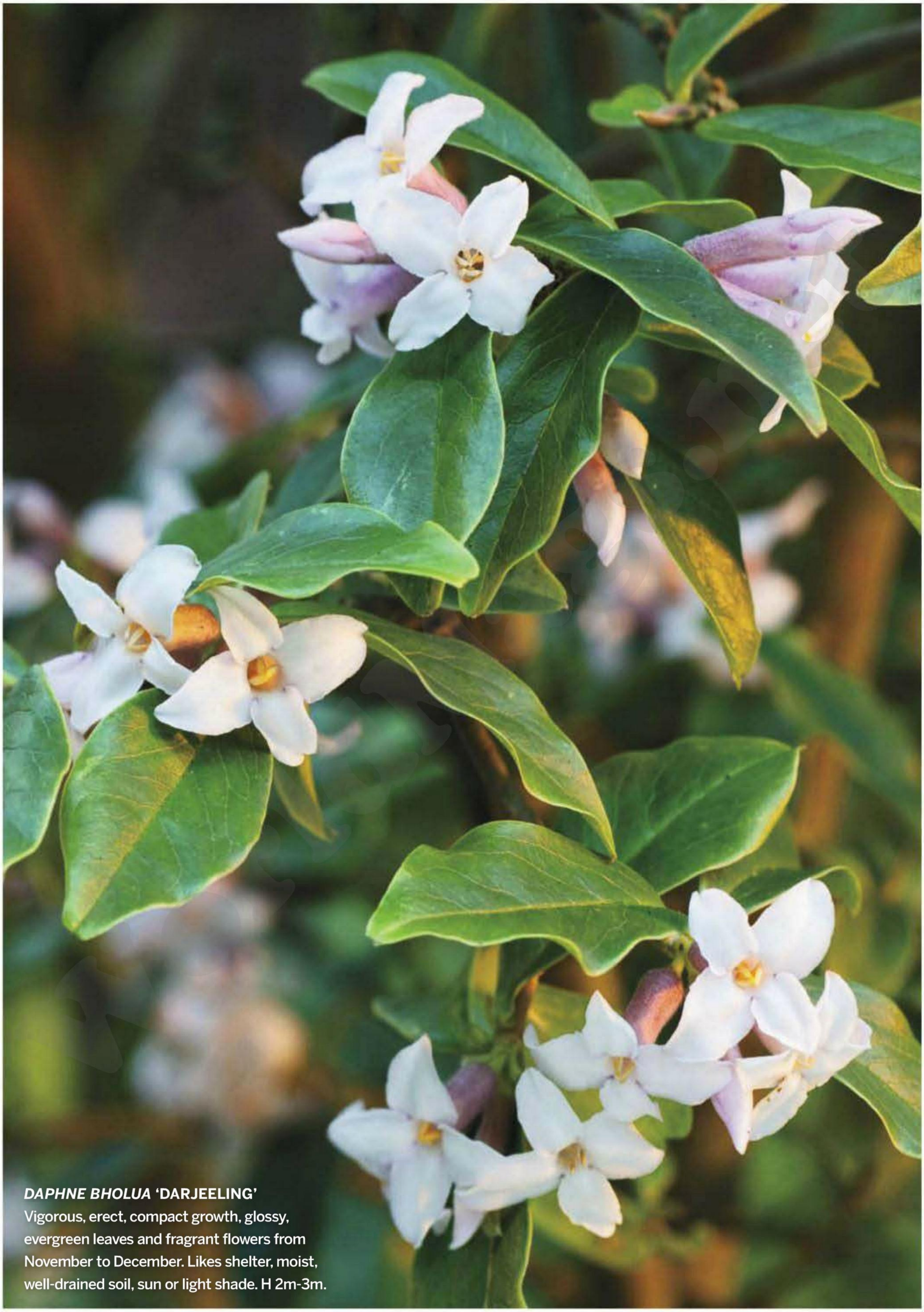
This evergreen flowers in spring and summer. Ideal for rock gardens or raised beds. Sun and moist, well-drained soil. H 60-75cm.



CLIVE NICHOLS / GAP PHOTOS

***D. BURKWOODII* 'SOMERSET'**

Reliable and compact, with semi-evergreen leaves and clusters of sweet-scented flowers all summer. Rock garden or raised bed; full sun; moist, well-drained soil. H 1m-1.5m. AGM.



DAPHNE BHOLUA 'DARJEELING'
Vigorous, erect, compact growth, glossy, evergreen leaves and fragrant flowers from November to December. Likes shelter, moist, well-drained soil, sun or light shade. H 2m-3m.

RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS

John Grimshaw

One of Britain's leading experts in snowdrops is also an authority on trees and has a garden full of interesting plants all year round

WORDS ANNIE GATTI PHOTOGRAPH CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Meeting John Grimshaw for the first time could be a daunting experience. He has a reputation for being an outspoken, top-notch plantsman, and at the age of 44 his CV lists a panoply of botanical achievements, from co-authorship of *Snowdrops* (the bible of snowdrop identification) and *New Trees* to papers in specialist journals, as well as membership of some of the Royal Horticultural Society's key plant committees. But at home in his Cotswold cottage garden, which he carved out of a bindweed-choked slope just six years ago, what comes across is a man who is passionate about *all* the plants he grows, from tender exotics to robust natives, and who delights in sharing them with visitors.

> *"He has a reputation for being an outspoken, top-notch plantsman, and his CV lists a panoply of botanical achievements"*

The pots by the front door are filled with unusual foliage plants – sprawling *Impatiens* from Uganda, furry-leaved *Calceolaria pavonii* from Mexico – while dotted through the borders are specimen trees chosen for their graceful shape or form. But surprisingly it is his flowery meadow – a patch of grass to which he added rattle and then a selection of bulbs and herbaceous plants – that he's most excited about. "It gives me as much pleasure as anything in the garden," he admits. In winter the trees, hellebores and drifts of bulbs stand out, especially the snowdrops.

John clearly was destined to become a plantsman. He was taken botanising in his pram by his mother, who loved wild flowers, and by the age of 13 he was in charge of his parents' garden in Maidenhead. His involvement with snowdrops developed when he was studying botany at Oxford and met Primrose Warburg. "She was a great gardener and had an amazing collection of snowdrops. She and [the snowdrop expert] Richard Nutt took me under their wing and brought me up as a fledgling galanthophile." After her death, and when John had returned from making an ecological survey of the Afromontane forest of Mount Kilimanjaro for his doctorate, he was asked to catalogue and disperse her collection. It was then that he met Henry Elwes, whose great grandfather had discovered *Galanthus elwesii* in Turkey in 1874, and his wife Carolyn. The couple had embarked on improving the historic collection at the family home, Colesbourne Park in Gloucestershire, and opened the garden for the first time in 1997.

After nearly four years in the Netherlands working for the seed company Sahin, John was itching to get his hands dirty once more. He found the ideal job: gardens manager of the 10-acre garden and arboretum at Colesbourne. There, as well as developing the spectacular swathes of snowdrops, he has been able to add a new spring garden, a bog garden, woodland walk and shrubberies.

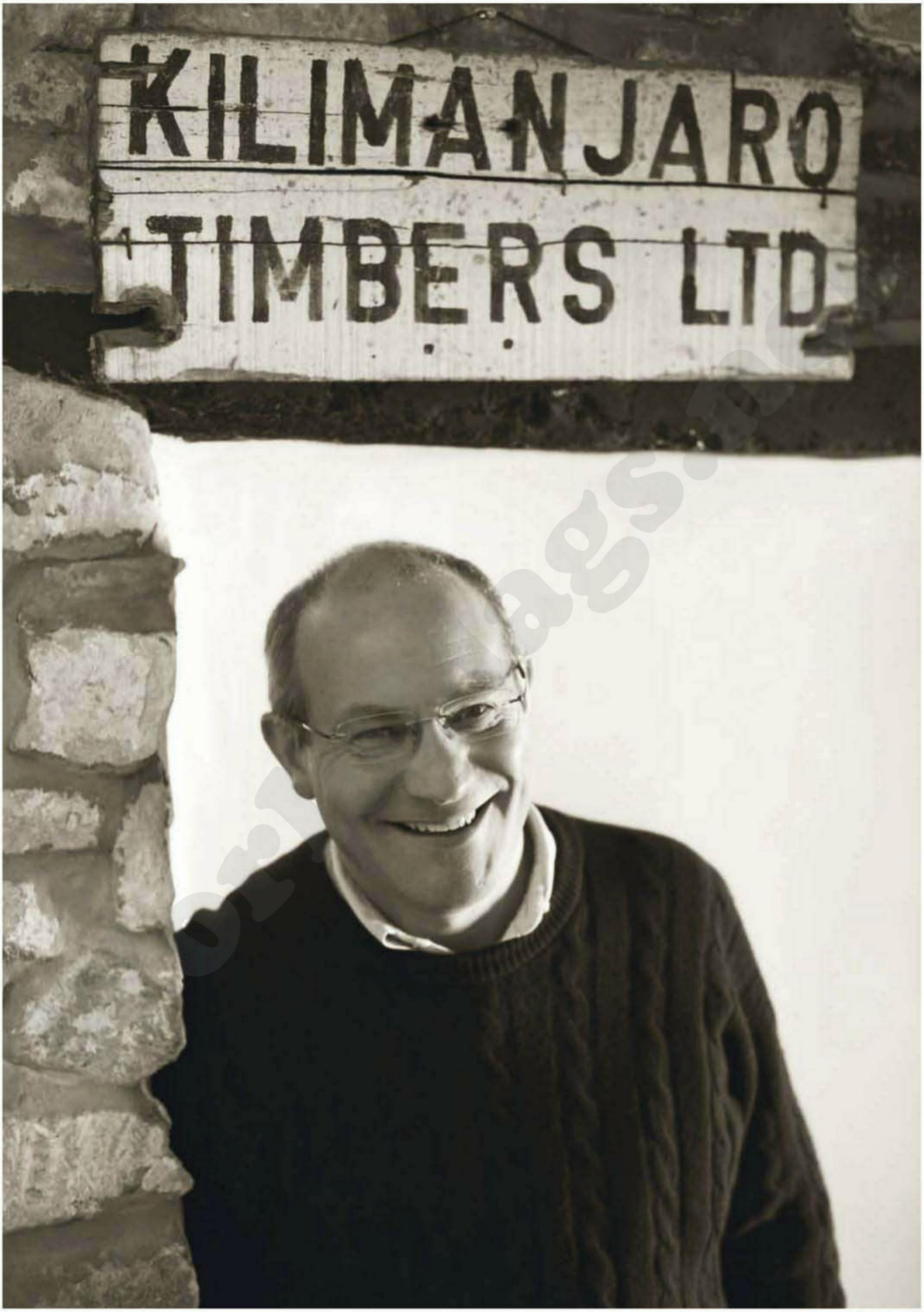
The charm of Colesbourne is, he thinks, the massed display of *Galanthus nivalis* combined with huge tracts of cultivars – more than 250 kinds. But John recognises that the majority of their February visitors are simply coming for a pleasant walk through drifts of these dainty white flowers at a time of year when not much is happening in gardens. "I am very happy to show people why it is worth getting down on your hands and knees to have a look inside the flower, but I'm also delighted if they just want to enjoy the spectacle."

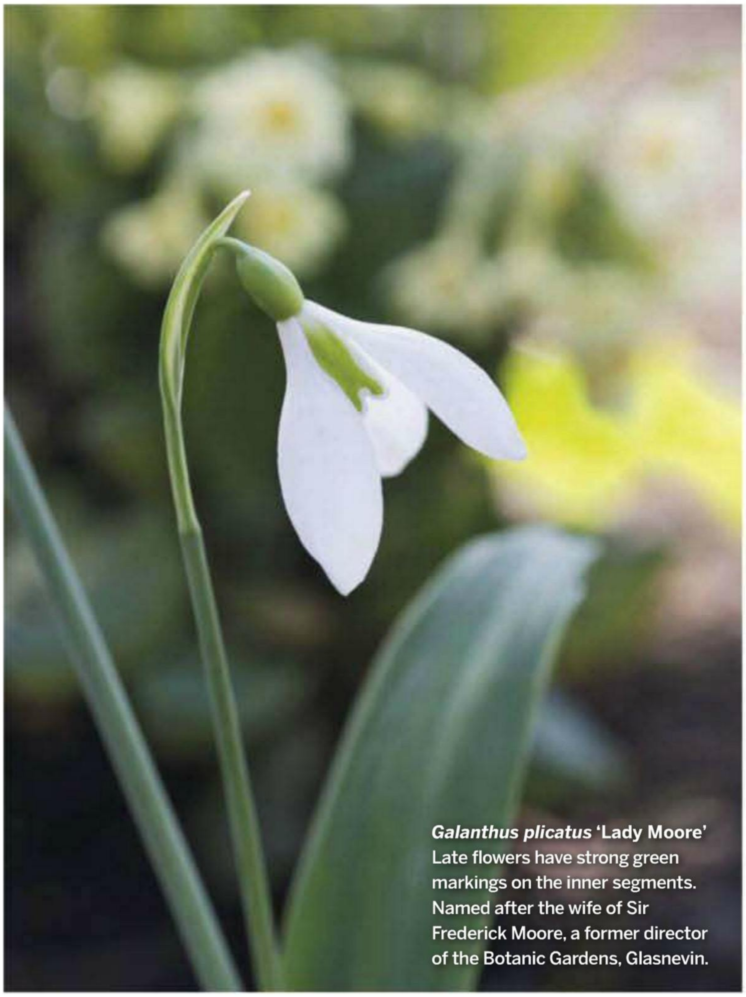
His own favourite snowdrop is the widely available 'S. Arnott'. "It's a big, ordinary snowdrop, wonderfully vigorous, with the most fantastic fragrance." Although he hosts snowdrop lunches he is not, he says, "an obsessive", and is more concerned that gardeners are successful with the snowdrops they put in than whether they have managed to acquire rare ones. This explains why he becomes quite heated when the subject of planting 'in the green' comes up. "It is nonsense," he says firmly. "What else do you dig up and move around in flower?" They usually *do* survive when planted in the green, he continues, but doing so sets the plants back at least a year. He insists that the best time to divide and plant snowdrops is when they are dormant, in summer.

Most of his other work is now concerned with trees – he is worried that we are not planting enough of the larger species in the UK. And in his new role as leader of the RHS Award of Garden Merit review process he wants to make sure that gardeners know that an AGM plant is going to give them a successful result in the right conditions. "It's a fantastic message for the ordinary gardener who is havering between one plant and another in the garden centre." □

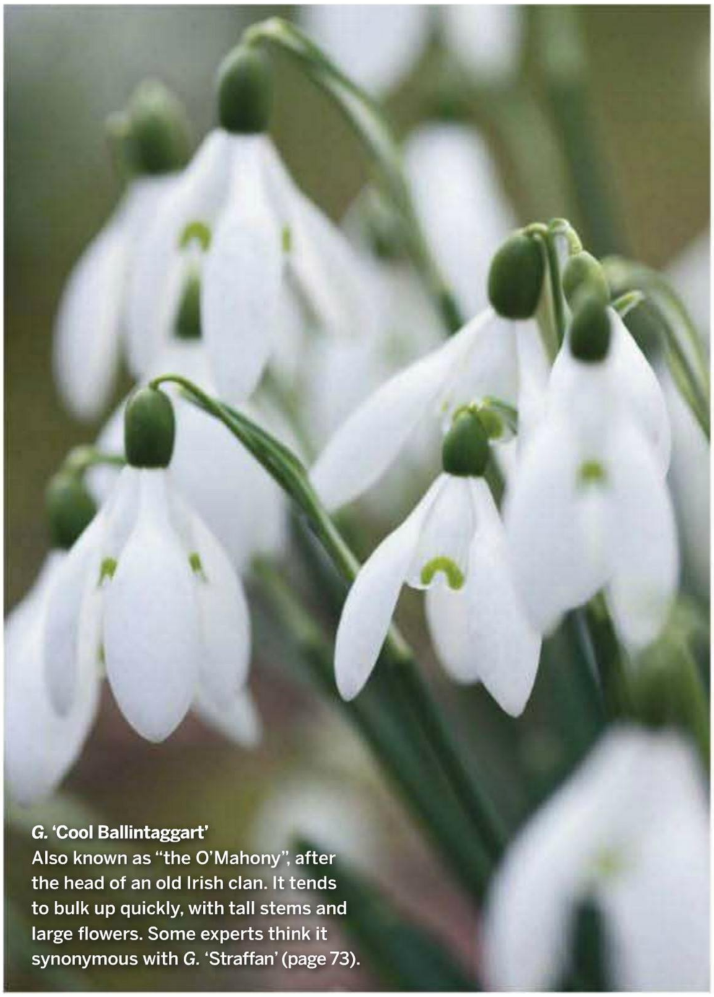
- For details of opening days at Colesbourne Park this month call 01242 870264 or visit the website at www.colesbournegardens.org.uk
- For details of other snowdrop collections open to visitors see our feature on Irish snowdrops (page 68).

NEXT MONTH Naomi Sachs, founder of Therapeutic Landscapes Network.

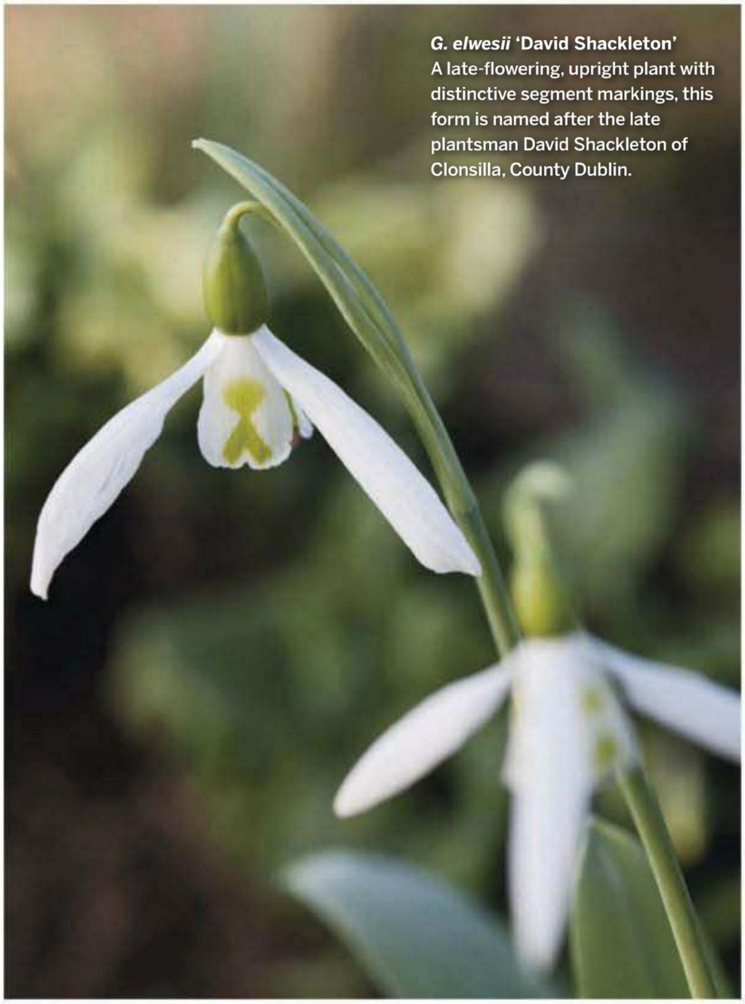

KILIMANJARO
TIMBERS LTD



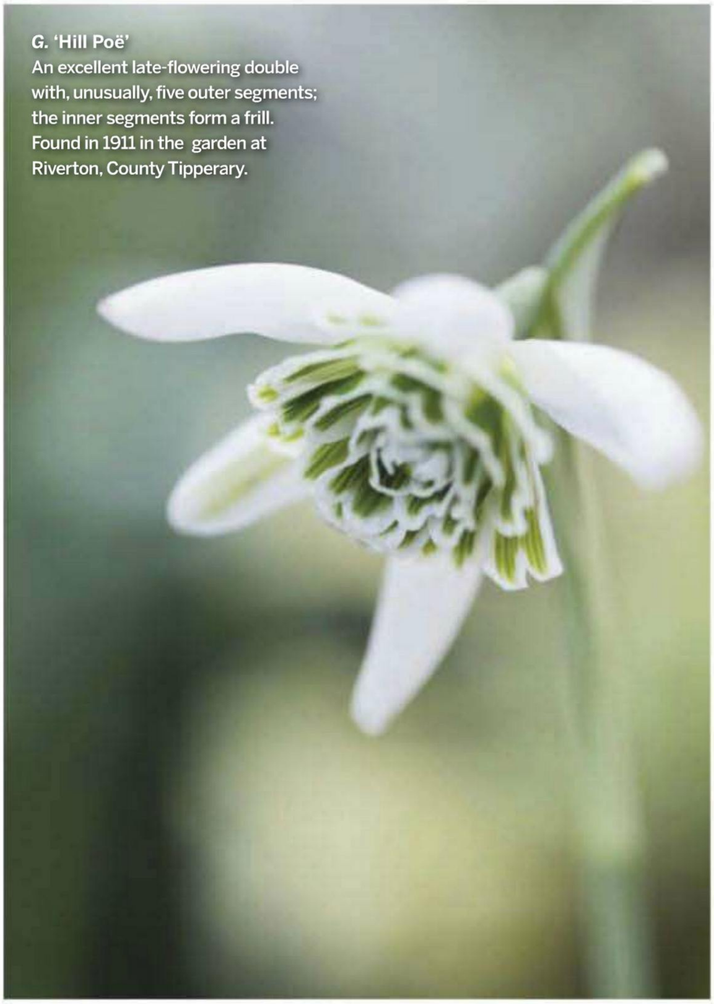
***Galanthus plicatus* 'Lady Moore'**
Late flowers have strong green markings on the inner segments. Named after the wife of Sir Frederick Moore, a former director of the Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.



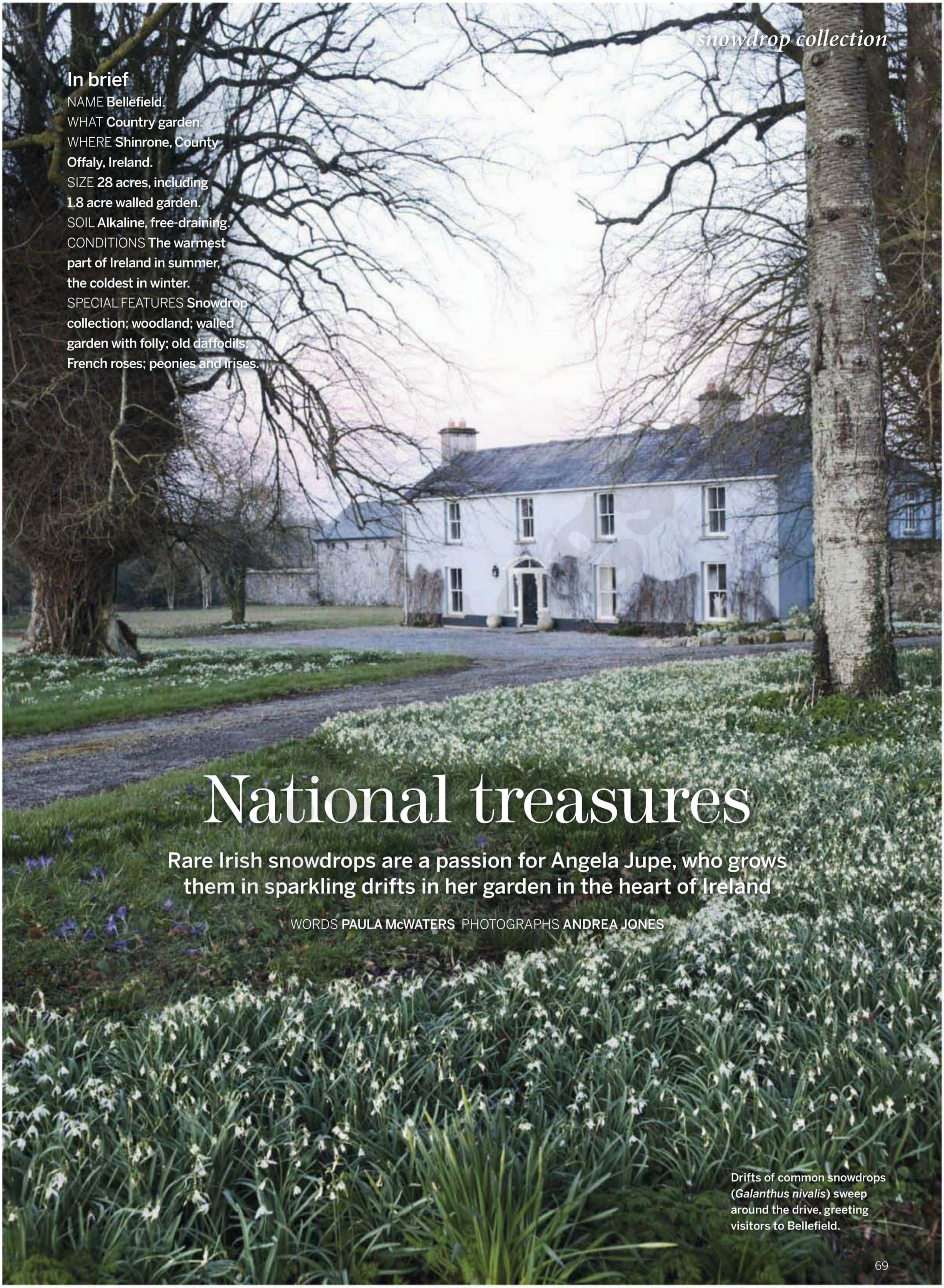
***G.* 'Cool Ballintaggart'**
Also known as "the O'Mahony", after the head of an old Irish clan. It tends to bulk up quickly, with tall stems and large flowers. Some experts think it synonymous with *G.* 'Straffan' (page 73).



***G. elwesii* 'David Shackleton'**
A late-flowering, upright plant with distinctive segment markings, this form is named after the late plantsman David Shackleton of Clonsilla, County Dublin.



***G.* 'Hill Poë'**
An excellent late-flowering double with, unusually, five outer segments; the inner segments form a frill. Found in 1911 in the garden at Riverton, County Tipperary.



In brief

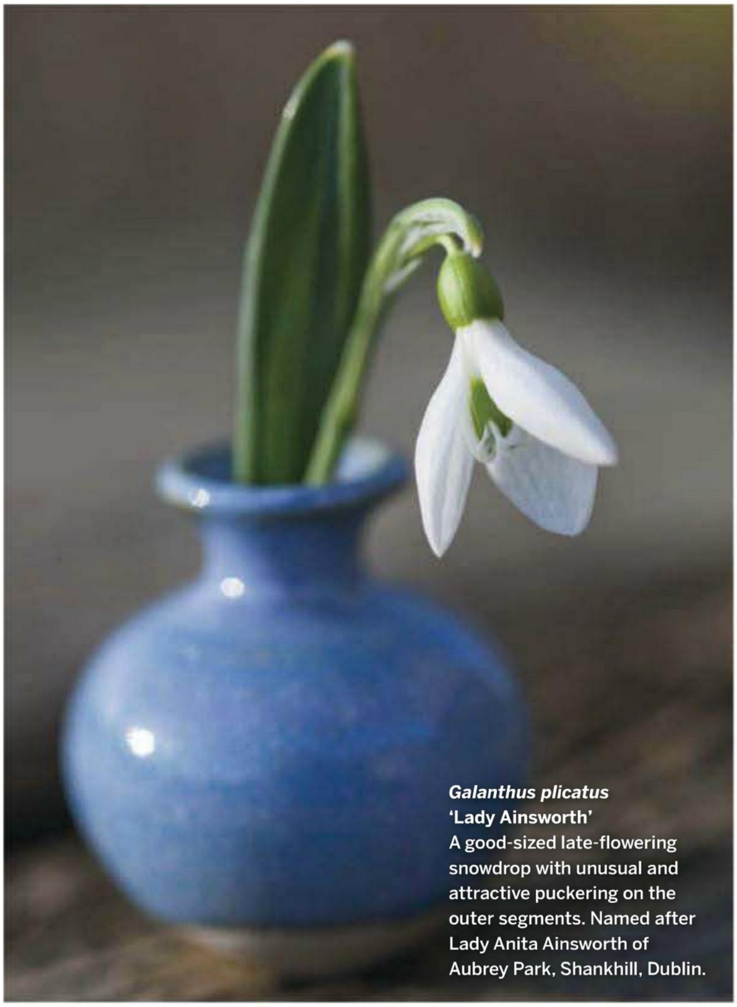
NAME **Bellefield.**
WHAT **Country garden.**
WHERE **Shinrone, County Offaly, Ireland.**
SIZE **28 acres, including 1.8 acre walled garden.**
SOIL **Alkaline, free-draining.**
CONDITIONS **The warmest part of Ireland in summer, the coldest in winter.**
SPECIAL FEATURES **Snowdrop collection; woodland; walled garden with folly; old daffodils; French roses; peonies and irises.**

National treasures

Rare Irish snowdrops are a passion for Angela Jupe, who grows them in sparkling drifts in her garden in the heart of Ireland

WORDS **PAULA McWATERS** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREA JONES**

Drifts of common snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*) sweep around the drive, greeting visitors to Bellefield.



***Galanthus plicatus* 'Lady Ainsworth'**
A good-sized late-flowering snowdrop with unusual and attractive puckering on the outer segments. Named after Lady Anita Ainsworth of Aubrey Park, Shankhill, Dublin.

Garden designer and architect Angela Jupe says she has loved snowdrops since she was 12 years old.

> *"There's something so elegant about the way the flower hangs – it reminds me of a ballet dancer with outstretched arms and a tutu"*

Angela Jupe's love of snowdrops dates back to 1764. That was the date set out in snowdrops in the front lawn of her aunt's Georgian house in County Tipperary when Angela was a child. "I was sent there to recuperate from illness when I was 12 years old," says Angela. "They marked the date the house was built and I thought they were gorgeous. There's something so elegant about the way the flower hangs – it reminds me of a ballet dancer with outstretched arms and a tutu."

Angela has always grown snowdrops but her interest really took off in the late 1980s, when her work as an architect and garden designer began to take her all over Ireland, visiting clients. "We have so many wonderful old gardens here but during the building boom a lot were bought for redevelopment. Wherever I saw builders I would ask if I could go in and see what was there. I found lots of snowdrops, as well as hellebores and narcissi, and started collecting them. I felt I was rescuing them from being covered in tarmac."

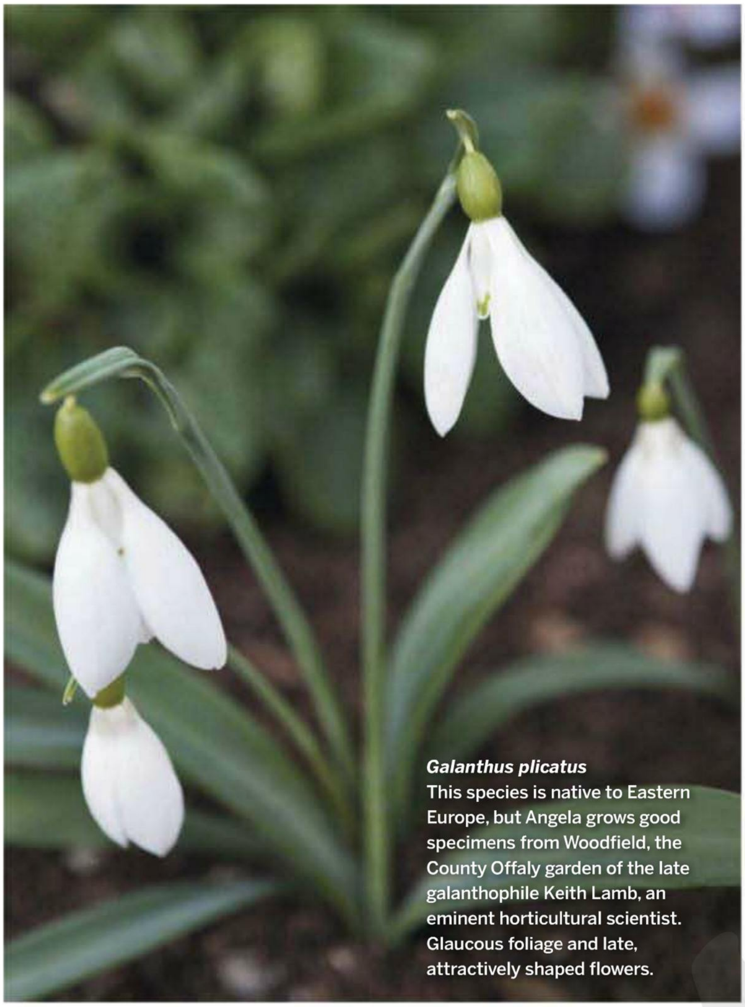
Alongside her rescuees, she has built up an ever-growing collection of cultivars through attending snowdrop events and swapping with people. "I realised there are particular Irish crosses. Some, such as 'Straffan', 'Brenda Troyle', 'David Shackleton', 'Drummond's Giant' and 'Hill Poë' are well known; others are only just being discovered and recognised as different."

A horde of white gold

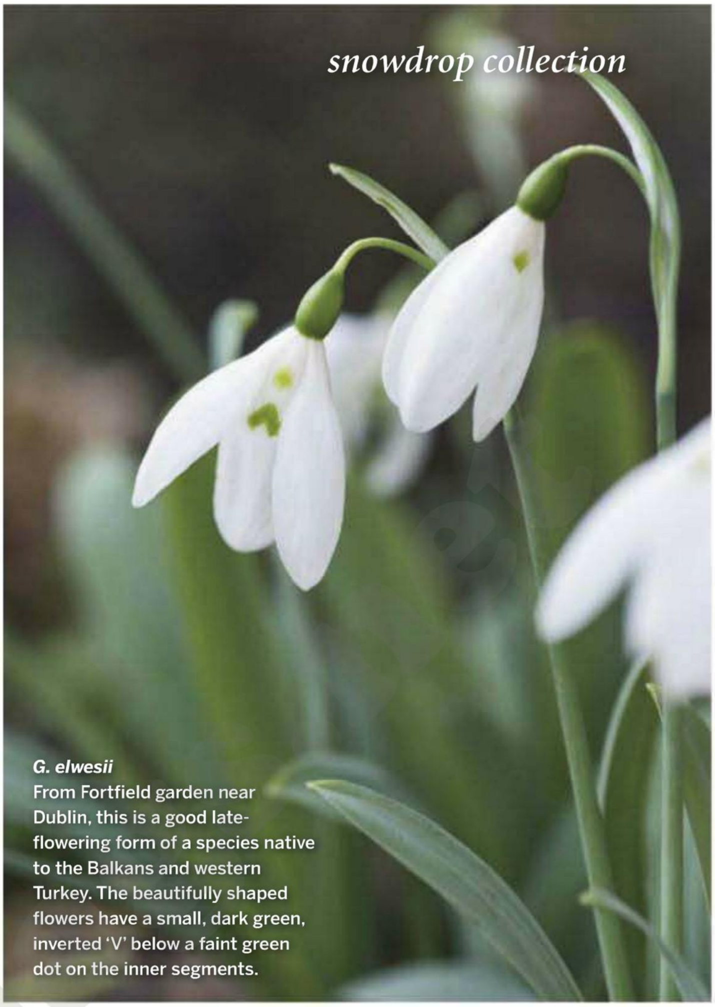
Angela's own garden, Bellefield, is in County Offaly in the Irish midlands. The romantic Georgian farmhouse, with its beautifully kept stone outbuildings (rented out as self-catering cottages), sits well back from the road. Drifts of the common snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis* flank the drive and run down into the woodland. "What's lovely is that as we cleared the undergrowth that had built up over 30 years of neglect, snowdrops started appearing: there was quite a collection here already." Angela has carefully lifted and divided these over the five years she has been here, to extend their spread.

Among those in the woodland she found some noticeably distinct ones, including one with an exceptionally broad, glaucous grey-green leaf and a small but well-formed flower. She would love to have her snowdrops independently assessed with a view to establishing official names for them.

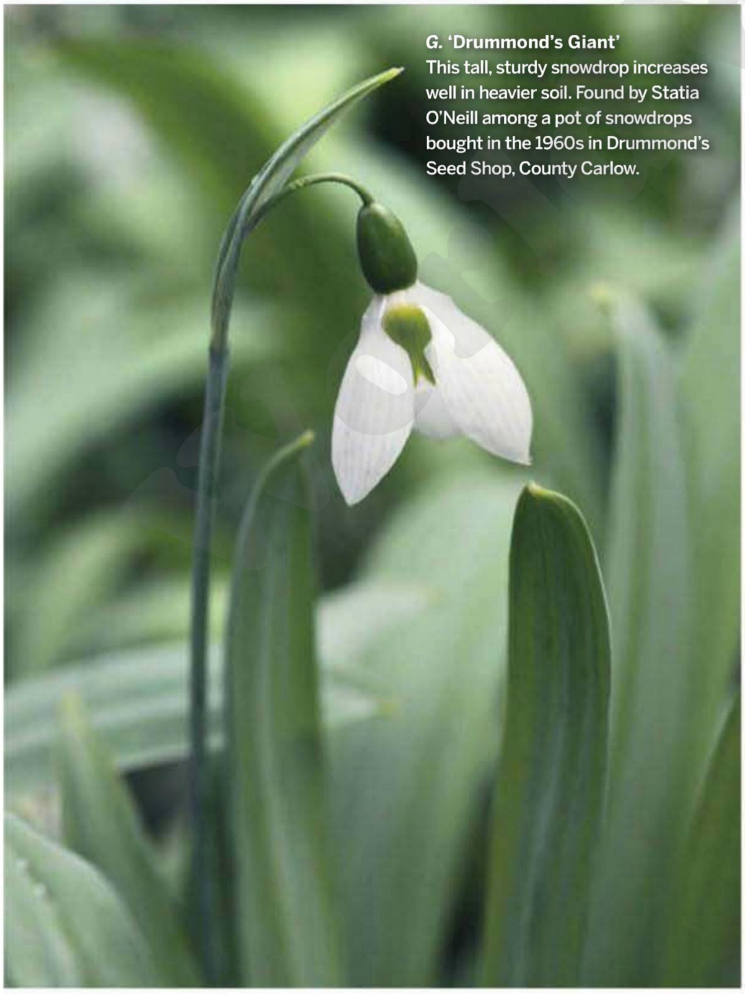
Her collection of 200 kinds of snowdrop is planted in the sheltered 1.8-acre walled garden behind the house. "I keep them in clumps about two feet apart because snowdrops are promiscuous and will cross." She has very good soil – the walled garden lay undisturbed for 30 years and before that, was used as a stud farm, so it has benefitted from plenty of leaf mould and manure. "When I am planting, I add a little compost and grit; that helps them thrive. The soil doesn't get waterlogged in winter and the bulbs are shaded by peonies and *Iris germanica* in summer, so they get enough heat to bake them, while still retaining moisture." ▷



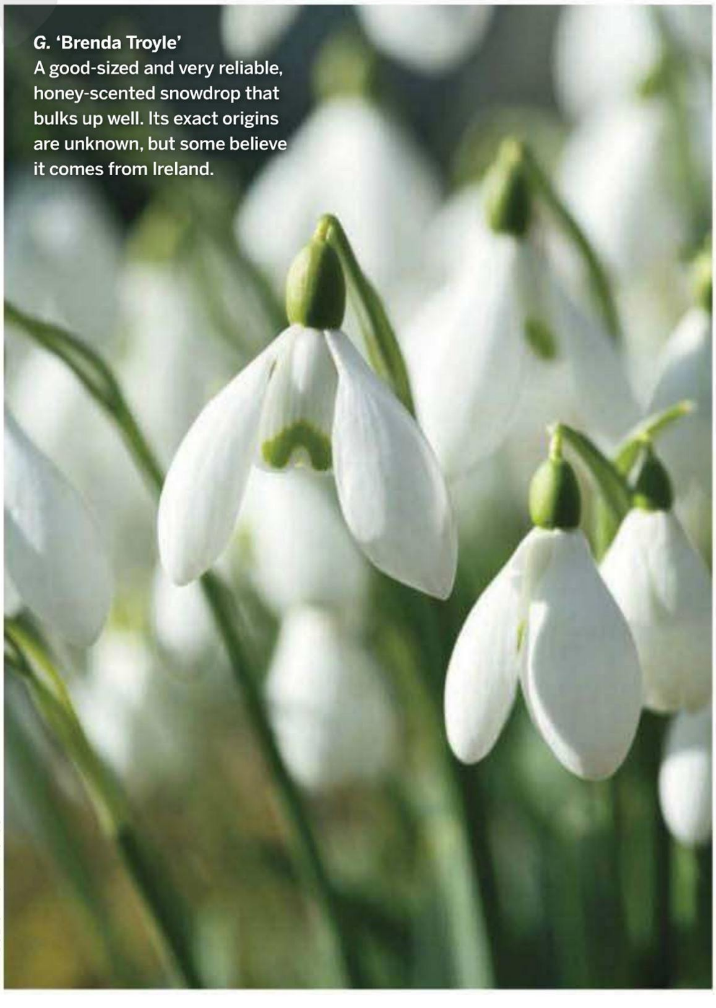
Galanthus plicatus
This species is native to Eastern Europe, but Angela grows good specimens from Woodfield, the County Offaly garden of the late galanthophile Keith Lamb, an eminent horticultural scientist. Glaucous foliage and late, attractively shaped flowers.



G. elwesii
From Fortfield garden near Dublin, this is a good late-flowering form of a species native to the Balkans and western Turkey. The beautifully shaped flowers have a small, dark green, inverted 'V' below a faint green dot on the inner segments.



***G.* 'Drummond's Giant'**
This tall, sturdy snowdrop increases well in heavier soil. Found by Statia O'Neill among a pot of snowdrops bought in the 1960s in Drummond's Seed Shop, County Carlow.



***G.* 'Brenda Troyle'**
A good-sized and very reliable, honey-scented snowdrop that bulks up well. Its exact origins are unknown, but some believe it comes from Ireland.

MARK BOLTON / GAP PHOTOS

Snowdrops speckle the pathways leading to an unusual folly built in 2007.

> *"It's a case of safety in numbers. The more gardens that hold these rare snowdrops, the less chance of cultivars being lost"*

▷ Angela doesn't do any propagation, other than lifting and dividing clumps when necessary. This she usually does just as they are coming into bloom, keeping plenty of soil around them to reduce the shock.

Saved for posterity

Angela makes no claims to be a snowdrop expert; she is simply a passionate collector. "I'm 68 and if I were to pop my clogs, would anyone bother to find out what I have here? I would love to see Irish snowdrops documented properly." To that end, she and a group of like-minded enthusiasts are keen to start a register and they regularly swap snowdrops and compare notes on how they grow. Another keen collector, Paddy Tobin, from Waterford, has researched them for several years on behalf of the Irish Garden Plant Society and his aim is to see a reference collection of Irish snowdrops established in a state-owned garden. Altamont Gardens (see *5 places to see snowdrops*, right) now has a significant number and Paddy and Angela both hope that in time, several gardens will hold similar collections. "It's a case of safety in numbers," says Paddy. "The more gardens that hold these rare snowdrops, the less chance of cultivars being lost."

As Angela's confidence has grown, she has learned to recognise the subtle differences between varieties but she also understands that individuality isn't the be all and end all. "A plant has to grow well and last. There's not much point in naming it if it doesn't."□

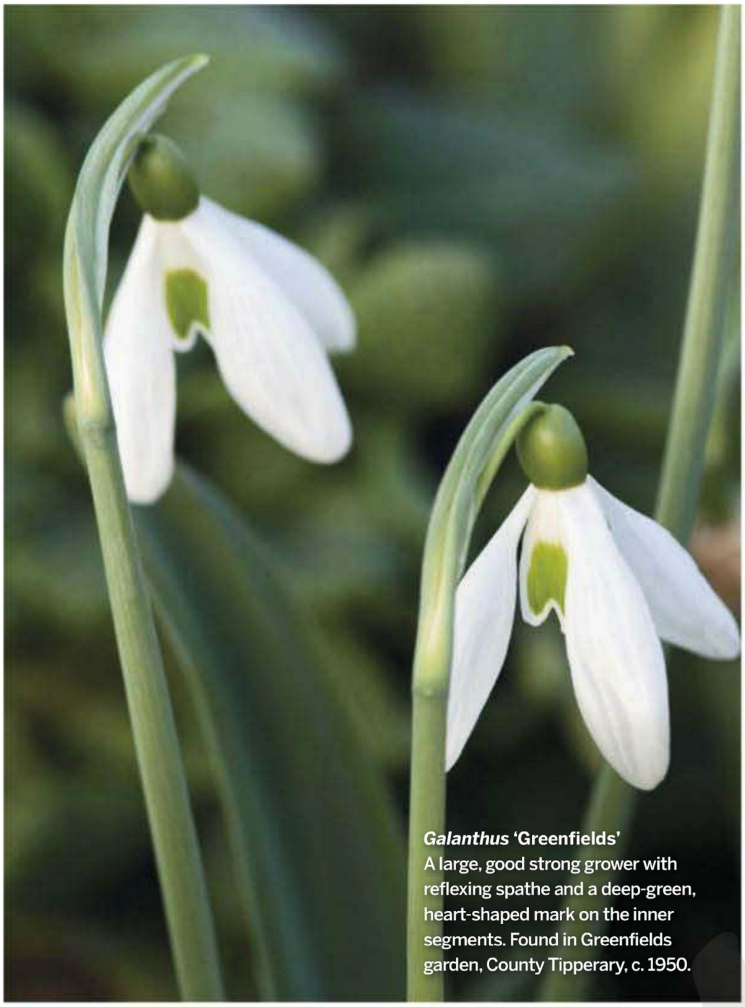
• Thanks to John Grimshaw for his help in identifying snowdrops pictured in this feature. Read our profile of John on page 66.

USEFUL INFORMATION

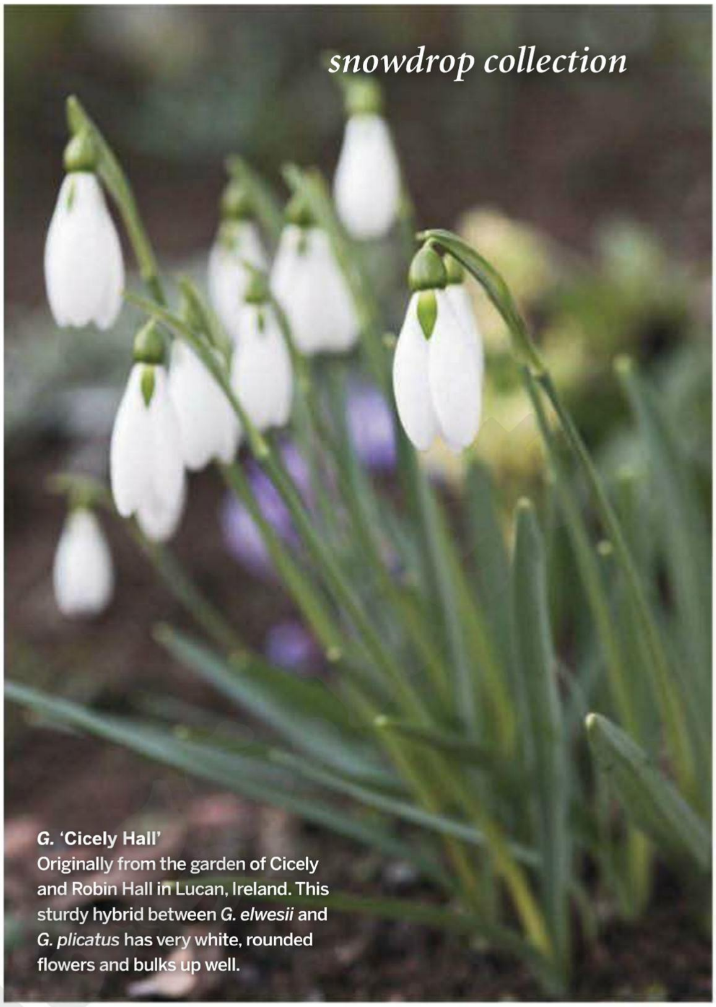
ADDRESS Bellefield, Shinrone, County Offaly, Ireland. TEL +353 (0)505 47766.
WEBSITE www.angelajupe.ie
OPEN One week per month, May to September, plus events (eg Plant Fair on 3 March; Tulip Festival on 21 April).

Four places to see snowdrops in Ireland & UK

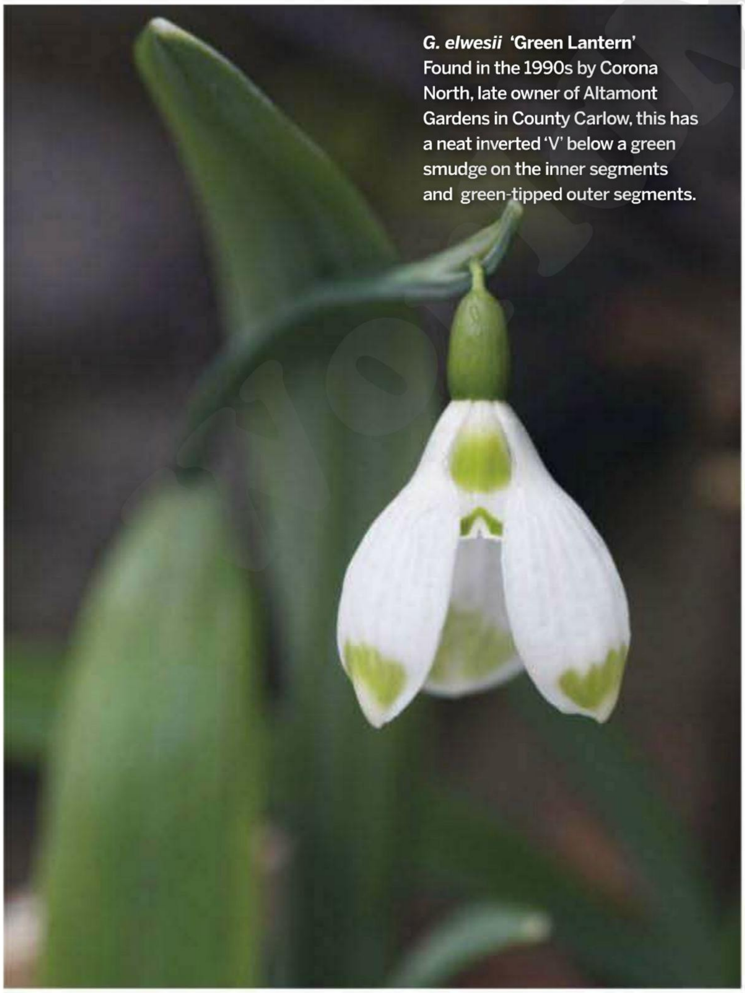
- **Altamont Gardens**
Bunclody Road, Tullow, County Carlow, Ireland. Tel +353 (0)59 915 9444, www.heritageireland.com. Snowdrop Week 20 to 26 February, daily, 9am-4pm.
- **Benington Lordship**
Stevenage, Herts SG2 7BS. Tel 08701 261709, www.beningtonlordship.co.uk. 4 to 26 February, daily, noon to 4pm.
- **Cambo**
Kingsbarns, St Andrews, Fife KY16 8QD. Tel 01333 450 054, www.camboestate.com. Snowdrop Festival, 1 February to 15 March, daily, 10am-5pm.
- **Hopton Hall**
Hopton, Wirksworth, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 4DF. Tel 01629 540458, www.hoptonhall.co.uk. Snowdrops, 1 February to 4 March, daily, 10.30am to 4pm.
- For other places to see snowdrops visit www.gardensillustrated.com



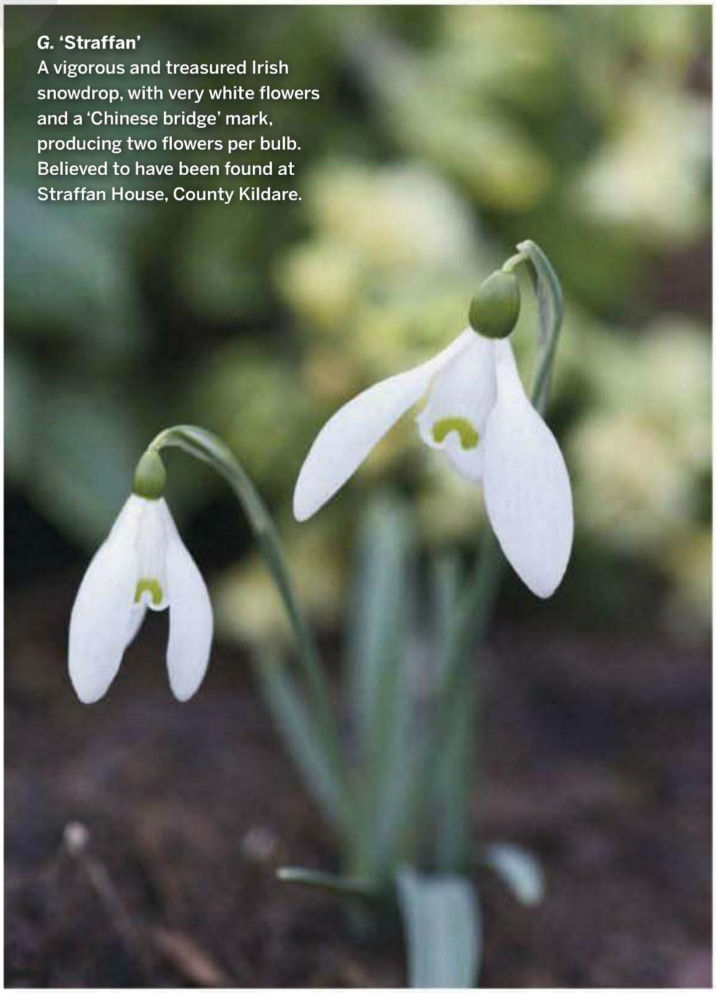
***Galanthus* 'Greenfields'**
A large, good strong grower with reflexing spathe and a deep-green, heart-shaped mark on the inner segments. Found in Greenfields garden, County Tipperary, c. 1950.



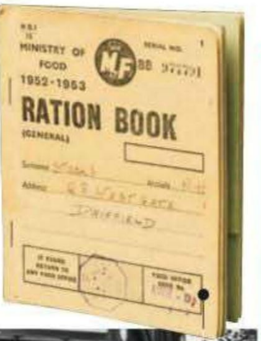
***G.* 'Cicely Hall'**
Originally from the garden of Cicely and Robin Hall in Lucan, Ireland. This sturdy hybrid between *G. elwesii* and *G. plicatus* has very white, rounded flowers and bulks up well.



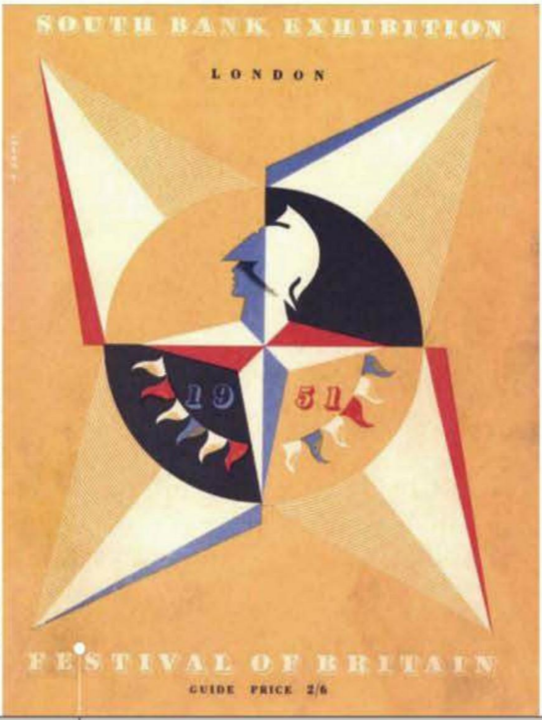
***G. elwesii* 'Green Lantern'**
Found in the 1990s by Corona North, late owner of Altamont Gardens in County Carlow, this has a neat inverted 'V' below a green smudge on the inner segments and green-tipped outer segments.



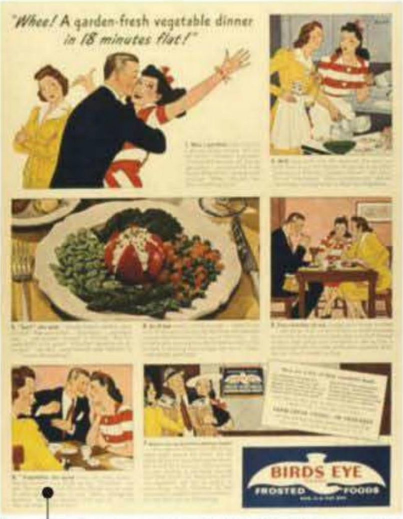
***G.* 'Straffan'**
A vigorous and treasured Irish snowdrop, with very white flowers and a 'Chinese bridge' mark, producing two flowers per bulb. Believed to have been found at Straffan House, County Kildare.



Rationing continued after the Second World War with Britons encouraged to grow their own to supplement meagre supplies.



The Festival of Britain in 1951 heralded a new era of hope and posterity to a nation wearied by the hardships of recent wars.


"Whee! A garden-fresh vegetable dinner in 18 minutes flat!"
BIRDS EYE
FROSTED FOODS

Easy, quick and sold with the promise of a whole new lifestyle, frozen foods became the chic thing to eat in post-war households.

How grow-your-own went from bust to boom

Our brief history of grow-your-own concludes with the story of how the movement recovered from post-war decline to achieve its current surge in popularity

WORDS AMBRA EDWARDS

By the end of the Second World War, 10 per cent of Britain's food was produced in private gardens and allotments. Rationing persisted until 1954: having dug for 'victory', Britain's gardeners now dug wearily for 'plenty'. The turning point came in 1951, when the Festival of Britain seemed to usher in a new decade of optimism and prosperity. Along with hoovers, fridges and wipe-clean formica, the first convenience foods began to appear, in a new kind of shop called a 'supermarket'. Who would want to grow dirty old cabbages when you could have quick and hygienic frozen peas and fish fingers? With increased prosperity and many more leisure opportunities, demand for allotments fell, and thousands of sites were sold off.

Enough alarm bells sounded for the Government, in 1964, to initiate an enquiry into allotments. The Thorpe Report, as it became known, concluded that allotments were an excellent thing for the health and wellbeing of the nation, but that the legislation surrounding them was a muddle, and a complete overhaul urgently required. Thirty-four years later, a Select Committee

RATION BOOK GETTY, RATION QUEUE SSPL/GETTY, FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN GUIDE COVER VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON. BIRD'S EYE ADVERT MARY EVANS/RETROGRAPH COLLECTION, STREATHAM SUPERMARKET MIRRORPIX

The first supermarket in the UK opened in Streatham in 1951. The convenience and choice meant many no longer saw the need to grow their own.

With increased availability of food, the take up of allotments fell. Fortunately the potager gardens of Villandry in the Loire showed us what a vegetable garden could look like.

Rosemary Verey took the grand scale of Villandry and created her own desirable take on the potager at Barnsley House, setting a trend in the 1980s.

BARNSLEY HOUSE POTAGER REPRODUCED WITH KIND PERMISSION OF WWW.ICANGARDEN.COM. VILLANDRY IMAGE BY CLAIRE TAKACS

report on the future of allotments came to exactly the same conclusion. Today, not one of the recommendations made by either report has been implemented. And all the fashionable hype about growing your own did not prevent Manor Garden Allotments in East London being bulldozed in 2007 to make way for a new Olympic Park.

From eyesore to art

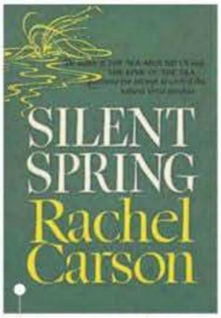
Allotments, as described by the Thorpe Report in 1969, were not things of beauty, but weedy, 'monotonous' and 'sordid', and tended by grumpy old men. Happily, Britain was about to discover the potager – the formal decorative vegetable garden, developed in 16th-century France as a horticultural status symbol. The ultimate potager of this kind is at Villandry, in the Loire Valley – an imaginative recreation of a French Renaissance garden made in 1906. Box-edged squares display intricate arrangements of vegetables chosen for their outstanding decorative qualities – ruby chard, ornamental cabbages, glossy white aubergines, frou-frou lettuces – with red standard roses rising at intervals from the crisp, clipped hedging. While Villandry is entirely ornamental – the garden cannot be cropped without ruining the effect – its influence has been colossal, not least on the late Rosemary Verey, who rushed home to make her own miniature version at Barnsley House in Gloucestershire.

The beds were small, the paths impractically narrow. All in all, the Barnsley House potager was not much bigger than a tennis court. But this photogenic space, with its neat squares and diamonds of colourful veg, its trellis patterns and curiously trained fruit trees, inspired countless imitations throughout 1980s Britain. These were invariably stocked with fashionable new salads, many introduced by Joy Larkcom.

In 1976, Joy set off with her family in a camper van for a year-long 'grand vegetable tour' of Europe. The 'cut and come again' techniques they studied in Belgium, the flavourful salad leaf mixtures they discovered in Italy, piquant greens such as rocket and chicory, are all now staples in our gardens and supermarkets. Yet as Joy researched further, she found that many of these 'new' plants had been widely grown in 18th-century British gardens. Next, she researched the salads of Asia: all who enjoy spicy 'oriental' leaves such as mustards, mizuna and tat-soi owe a great debt of thanks to Mrs Larkcom. ▷

The industrialisation of farming saw the widespread use of pesticides sprayed over vast areas of crop.

Lady Eve Balfour was a key figure in the formative years of the organic movement, carrying out research on the relationship between the soil, food production and health.



In 1962 Rachel Carson's seminal book on the effects of DTT usage prompted growing concerns over the use of chemicals in farming.

In reaction to standardisation, the Heritage Seed Library was set up to offer traditional varieties of vegetable seed.

> *Cherishing the dream of 'the good life'… idealistic townies defected to the countryside, determined to be self sufficient*

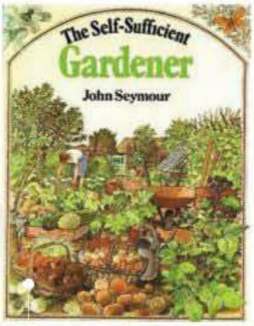
▷ The organic movement

Joy was, and remains, staunchly committed to organic growing. As early as the 1920s, pioneers such as Rudolf Steiner in Germany and Rolf Gardiner in Dorset had denounced the industrialisation of agriculture, and sought a more holistic relationship with the land. In 1939, Lady Eve Balfour launched the first ever side-by-side comparison of organic and conventional farming, leading, in 1946, to the foundation of the Soil Association. In a post-war environment where maximum food production was the ideal, and where now notorious poisons such as Lindane had been welcomed in the garden, the organic movement was at first dismissed as cranky. It was not until the publication in 1962 of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*, detailing the catastrophic effects of DDT on the environment, that the tide began to turn, and ordinary people began to wonder what was in their food.

Meanwhile, in 1958, another 'crank', one Lawrence Hills, began to experiment with chemical-free horticulture. His pioneering research organisation, known today as Garden Organic, also set up the Heritage Seed Library to conserve heirloom vegetable varieties displaced by new F1 varieties introduced after 1927. Driven by growing consumer interest in food, health and the environment, the organic movement gained ground throughout the 1970s. For some, chemical-free home-grown food came to represent not just a nutritional preference, but a life choice. Cherishing the dream of 'the good life', and undeterred by the popular TV sitcom of that name, idealistic townies defected to the countryside, determined to be self-sufficient. Their Bible was *The Complete Book of Self-Sufficiency*, published by

CROP SPRAYING IMAGE PROFUSION PICTURE LIBRARY/ALAMY. LADY EVE BALFOUR IMAGE REPRODUCED WITH KIND PERMISSION OF WWW.SOILASSOCIATION.ORG. HERITAGE SEEDS IMAGE REPRODUCED WITH KIND PERMISSION OF HERITAGE SEED LIBRARY

The 1970s TV sitcom *The Good Life* epitomised the growing interest in the organic movement – although it retained its 'alternative' image.



John Seymour pioneered the idea of self-sufficiency. His numerous books encouraged a simpler approach to life.

Many of the salad leaves we now grow in our gardens were popularised by Joy Larkcom in the 1980s.

Grow your own comes of age with vegetables now key to many Chelsea gardens, such as the 2011 B&Q garden with its 'edible' tower.

John Seymour in 1976, followed by *The Self-Sufficient Gardener* in 1978. These books popularised many techniques all gardeners now think of as standard, such as raised beds, no-dig, heavy mulching and regular use of green manures.

Millennial milestones

By 1996, a new generation of allotment holders encompassed young and old, rich and poor, women and ethnic minorities, and the demand for plots substantially outstripped the supply. Since Repton, the vegetable plot had been the poor relation of the flower garden: now vegetables dominated at Chaumont and Chelsea, while in 2000, the 'Garden for People', made by community gardeners, stole the show at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, prompting a government-backed campaign for growing in schools.

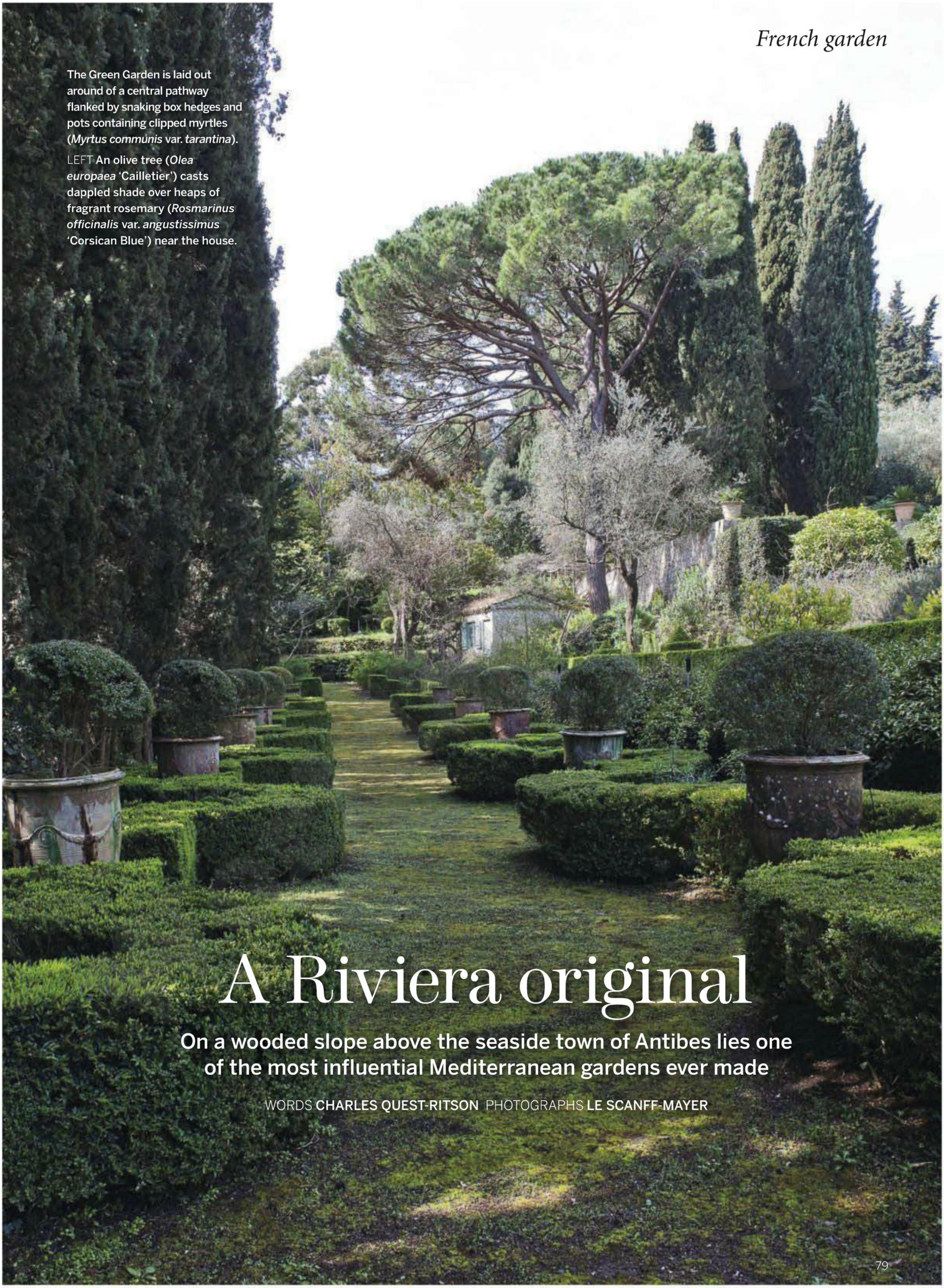
Over the last decade, interest has swelled more swiftly than an outsize marrow, with a spectacular surge over the last two years. The RHS launched its 'Grow Your Own' campaign to encourage novice growers, the National Trust pledged to provide land for 1,000 new allotments by 2012, while Carol Klein's infectious enthusiasm for fruit and veg on TV persuaded countless thousands to have a go. Between 2009 and 2010, demand for allotments grew by 20 per cent, leaving 94,124 frustrated growers without a plot. Figures like these prompted the Landshare initiative to try to match would-be growers with landowners with land to spare. Even students have got in on the act, with a dozen or so university allotments.

So what of the future? Despite three severe winters, the latest grow-your-own bandwagon is the 'climate change' garden. But is it really anything new? 'Progressive' techniques such as raised beds and block planting were current up to the early 18th century, when they were replaced by flat beds and rows. Cut-and-come-again salads were the norm in Jacobean plots. And let's look what garden historian Eleanour Rohde reports was growing in the Victorian garden: oranges, lemons, citrons, grapes, peaches, apricots, nectarines, pineapples, pomegranates, medlars, quince, more than 40 kinds of melon, tomatoes, cucumbers, chillies, peppers, aubergines. Apart from olives (which no one grew then), and perhaps Sichuan peppers, we're just rediscovering what was grown 100 years ago. □

THE GOOD LIFE IMAGE BY DAVE EDWARDS/BBC. JOY LARKCOM IMAGE REPRODUCED WITH KIND PERMISSION BY FRANCES LINCOLN PUBLISHING LTD. B&Q GARDEN IMAGE BY ANDREA JONES/ALAMY

In brief

NAME **La Chèvre d'Or**
WHAT **Private, modern garden with formal layout.**
WHERE **Just outside Antibes in the South of France.**
SIZE **2¼ acres.**
CLIMATE **Mediterranean (hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters).**
SOIL **Loam, overlying limestone on old olive terraces.**
POINTS OF INTEREST **Influential design, lavish planting, decorative detail.**



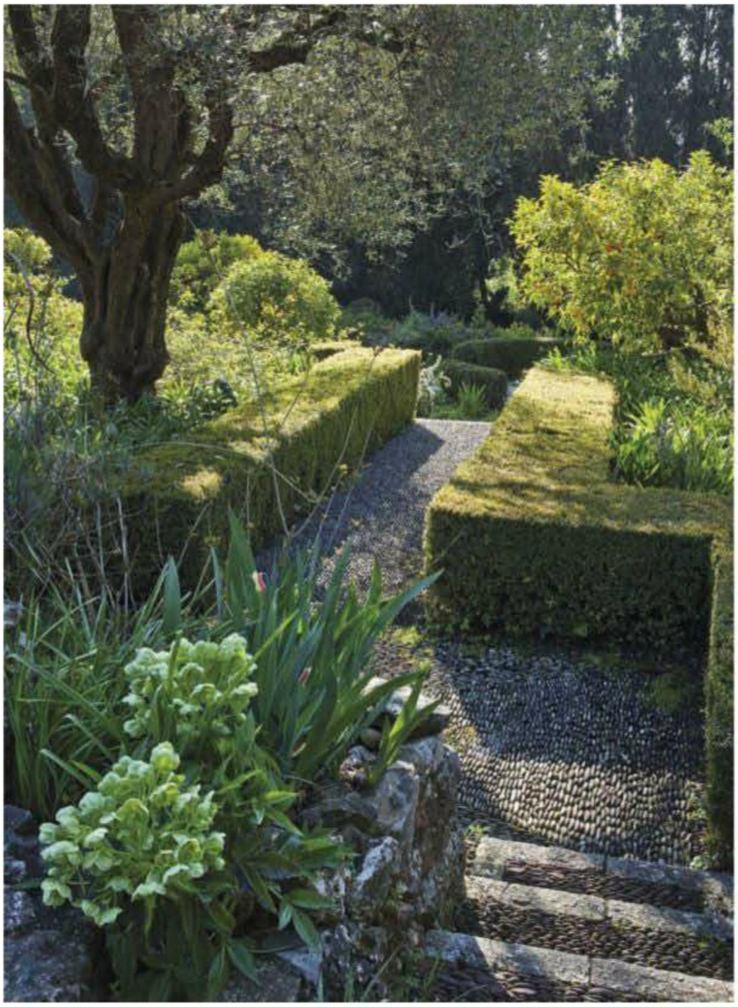
The Green Garden is laid out around of a central pathway flanked by snaking box hedges and pots containing clipped myrtles (*Myrtus communis* var. *tarantina*).

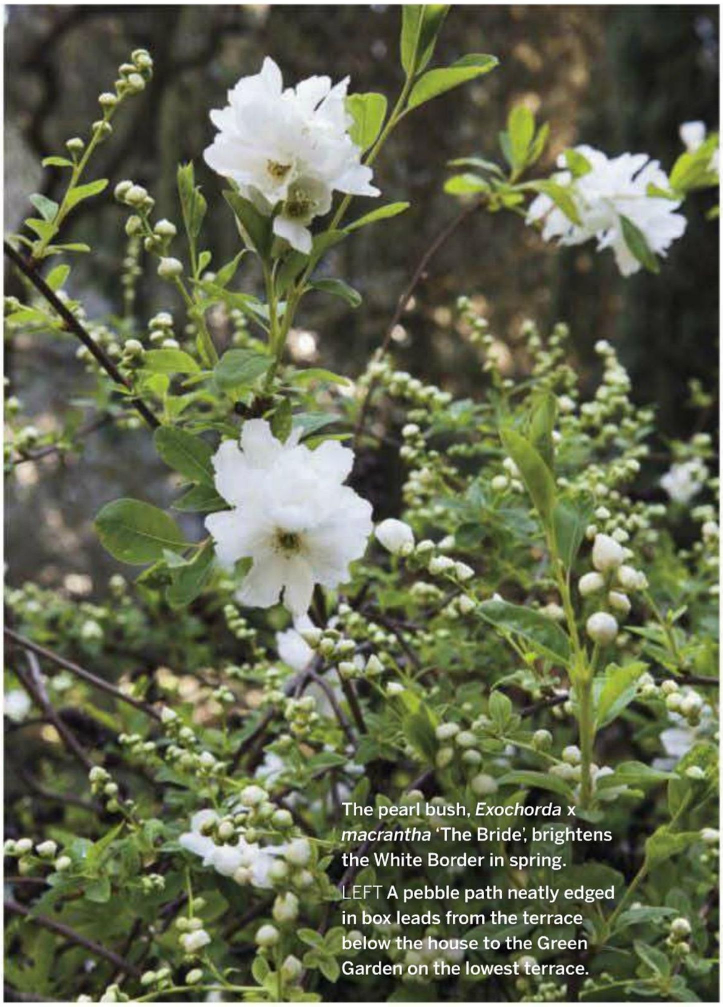
LEFT An olive tree (*Olea europaea* 'Cailletier') casts dappled shade over heaps of fragrant rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis* var. *angustissimus* 'Corsican Blue') near the house.

A Riviera original

On a wooded slope above the seaside town of Antibes lies one of the most influential Mediterranean gardens ever made

WORDS **CHARLES QUEST-RITSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **LE SCANFF-MAYER**





The pearl bush, *Exochorda* x *macrantha* 'The Bride', brightens the White Border in spring.

LEFT A pebble path neatly edged in box leads from the terrace below the house to the Green Garden on the lowest terrace.

When the French Riviera was a winter resort, 100 years ago, gardens were designed to provide colour and scent from December to April. Then a new generation of owners began to acquire houses and gardens on the Côte d'Azur for their summer holidays, and the plantings changed accordingly – bright bougainvilleas, hibiscus and oleanders for the months of July and August. But still the visitors were seasonal; few owners thought of making gardens that would give pleasure through all 12 months of the year.

In 1948 the industrialist Pierre Champin and his wife Nicole bought a farmhouse at Biot, just inland from Antibes. The house's name, La Chèvre d'Or, derives from the legend that a golden goat stands guard over a treasure-hoard hidden within its walls.

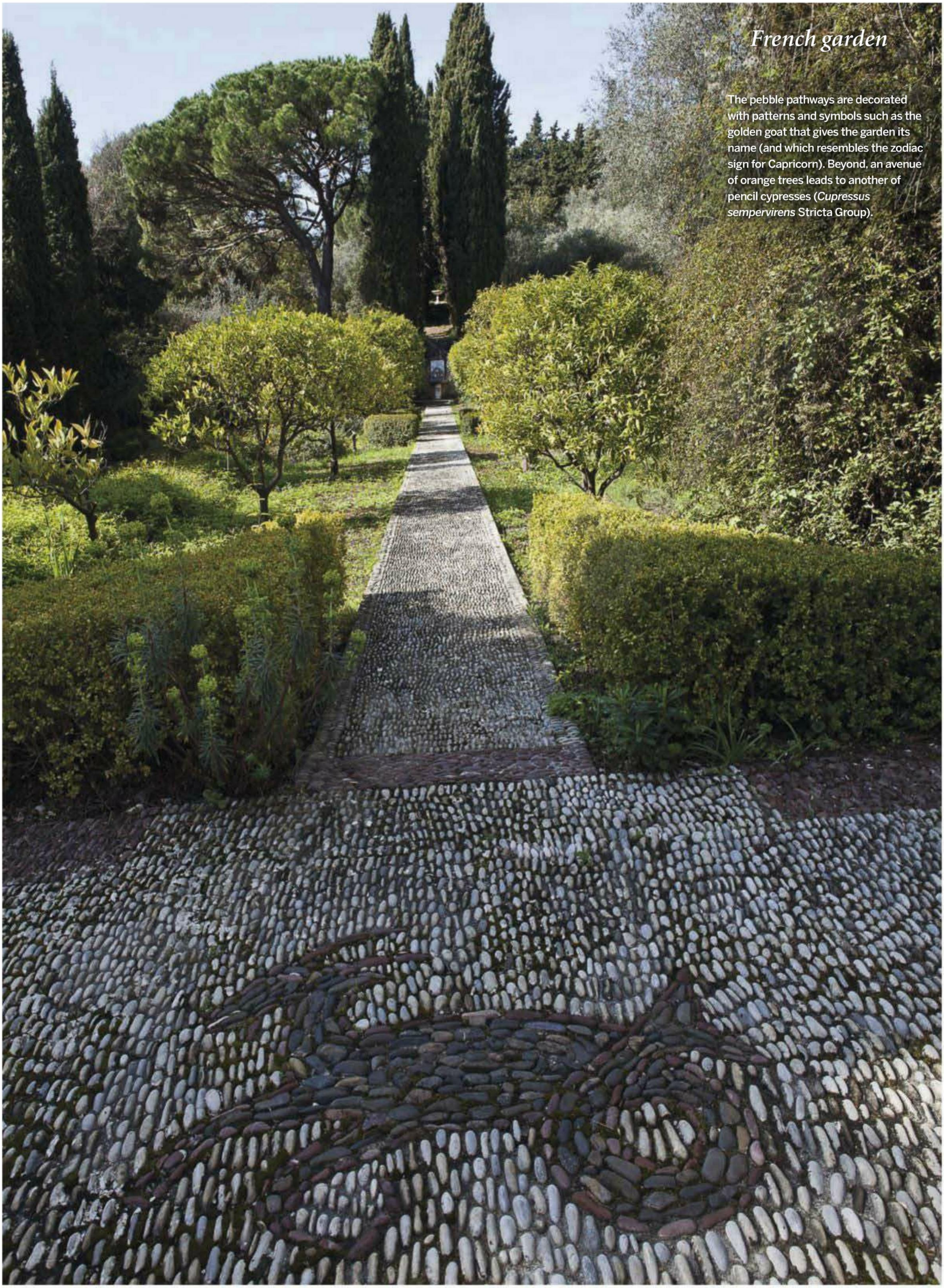
The Champins were one of the first couples to treat the Côte d'Azur as a place to which they could commute from Paris for the weekend, travelling by train or aeroplane. Socially active, they wanted an all-seasons house and garden to entertain their smart friends and guests. Charles de Gaulle, Winston Churchill and Christian Dior all came to the newly gentrified house; Jean Cocteau produced plays and François Poulenc gave concerts.

The house came with 2.25 acres of south-facing olive trees, terraced up over ten levels. In search of garden style, the Champins turned to Mediterranean traditions for structure. You see this today as soon as you walk through the vaulted entrance and spy the citrus walk straight ahead of you, planted with oranges, mandarins and grapefruit and underplanted with intensely blue-flowered leadwort, *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*. Yet it is not the plantings that catch your eye but the stunning pebbled paths, here and throughout the garden. The swirling patterns, the contrasts of colour, the portraits of golden goats – all decoratively tricked out in small, rounded pebbles – are firmly rooted in Mediterranean culture.

Inspiring imitators

La Chèvre d'Or changed the way people thought about gardening on the Côte d'Azur and its influence spread way beyond the Riviera. One iconic image of the garden has dominated Mediterranean garden design since it was laid out 60 years ago. On the lowest terrace, sometimes known as the Green Garden (pictured on page 79), 12 vintage Anduze pots, still flecked with their original green glaze, line a walk that was once grassed, but is now no longer watered artificially. Six along each side, the pots are planted with balls of clipped myrtle and strung together with a low serpentine box hedge that weaves its way around, behind and in front of them. At one end is a pool with a fountain and a double set of steps whose rises are covered by the dwarf creeping fig (*Ficus* ▷

> *"it is the pots and their hedging that steal the show. They have spawned as many copies in Mediterranean gardens as Sissinghurst's white garden"*



The pebble pathways are decorated with patterns and symbols such as the golden goat that gives the garden its name (and which resembles the zodiac sign for Capricorn). Beyond, an avenue of orange trees leads to another of pencil cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens* Stricta Group).

> *“ The Champins were successful not just with their all-seasons design, but also in planting to create subtle effects of light and shade ”*

▷ *pumila*). But it is the pots and their hedging that steal the show. They have spawned as many copies in Mediterranean gardens as Sissinghurst’s White Garden has in Britain.

The Champins quickly acquired gardening friends. Vîcomte Charles de Noailles advised them to install water features and Basil Leng brought plants from Lawrence Johnston’s garden at Serre de la Madone (his *Magnolia delavayi* and *Mahonia lomariifolia* still flourish today). Other chums – all good plantsmen – included Anthony Norman from La Garoupe and Lady Iliffe at Villa Roquebrune.

Light and shade

The Champins were successful not just with their all-seasons design, but also in planting to create subtle effects of light and shade. The citrus avenue (page 81) leads to a baroque wall-fountain below a cypress avenue whose trees are planted ever more closely to increase the length of the perspective. Stone staircases lead up and down the terraces towards a series of gardens, left and right, each different in character and colour, in contrast to the innumerable shades of green. These were added by Antoinette and Alexander Redelé-Dutilh when they bought the property in 1999.

The plant content is impressive – fields of agapanthus, pergolas heaped with wisteria, Banksian roses shinning up cypresses, a blue ceanothus garden, a silver-grey garden of lavender and *Helichrysum*, and semi-tropical trees such as dombeyas, jacarandas, bauhinias, chorisias and blue fan palms (*Brahea armata*).

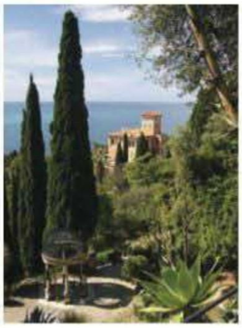
On one of the higher terraces, just below a small pool planted with *Nelumbo nucifera* – the sacred waterlily – lies a pretty orangery, used as an extra dining room. The blue trumpet vine (*Thunbergia grandiflora*) and fragrant brugmansias frame the view out over a small grass lawn whose sides are enclosed by olive trees, cut flat to create a line of grey leaves on either side. Olives are the dominant agricultural crop on the Riviera, so not only do these grey-leaved walls represent an unusual and effective garden-use of olive trees, but they also provide a link back to La Chèvre d’Or’s history as a farm.

The garden is organically maintained by one part-time gardener, but Antoinette and Alexander Redelé-Dutilh have now decided, with great regret, to put La Chèvre d’Or up for sale. It is to be hoped that the new owner, when found, will value and enhance this celebration of all that is best in Mediterranean gardening. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

La Chèvre d’Or is open by appointment, but as the property is for sale, arrangements may change under a new owner. The present owners are M et Mme Redelé-Dutilh. ADDRESS La Chèvre d’Or, 91 Chemin de la Chèvre d’Or, 06410 Biot, France. WEBSITE www.lachevredor.com

Five great gardens to visit nearby



1 Hanbury Gardens, La Mortola
Famous Riviera garden just across the border in Italy, started by plantsman Sir Thomas Hanbury in 1867 and continued by his family for nearly a century.
www.giardinihanbury.com

2 Villa Noailles, Grasse
Vîcomte Charles de Noailles’s own garden in an olive grove – firm design and rich, English-style plantings.
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3 Domaine de la Prieuré, Tourrettes-sur-Loup
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4 Villa Éphrussi, St-Jean-de-Ferrat
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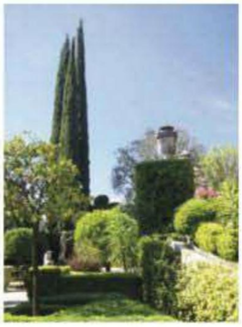

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5 La Casella, Opio
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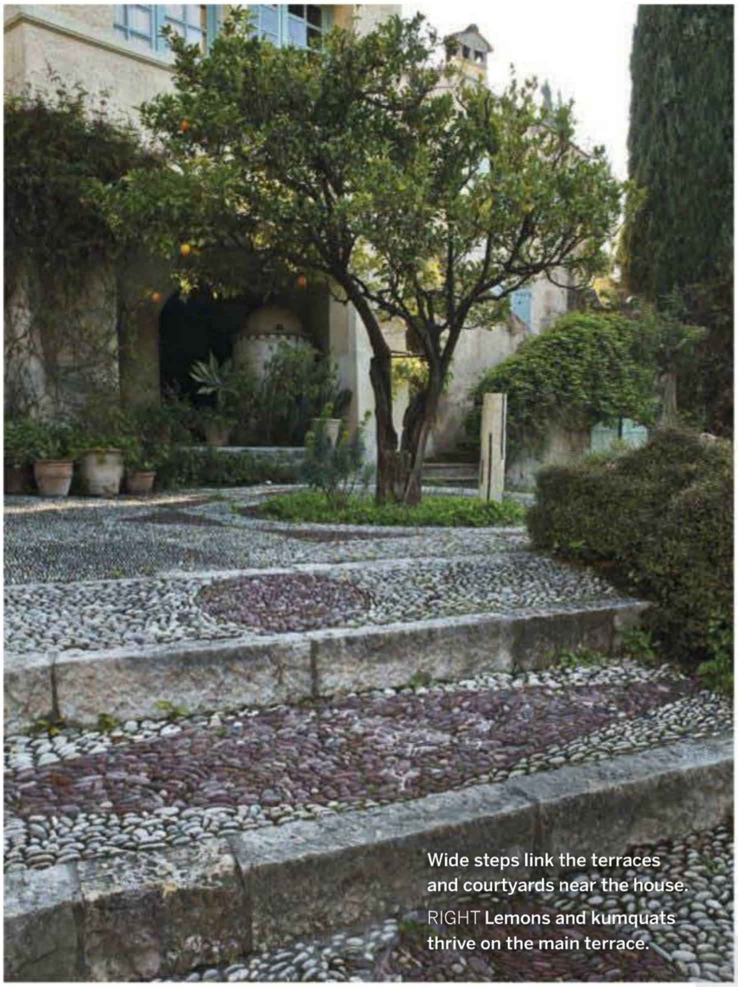
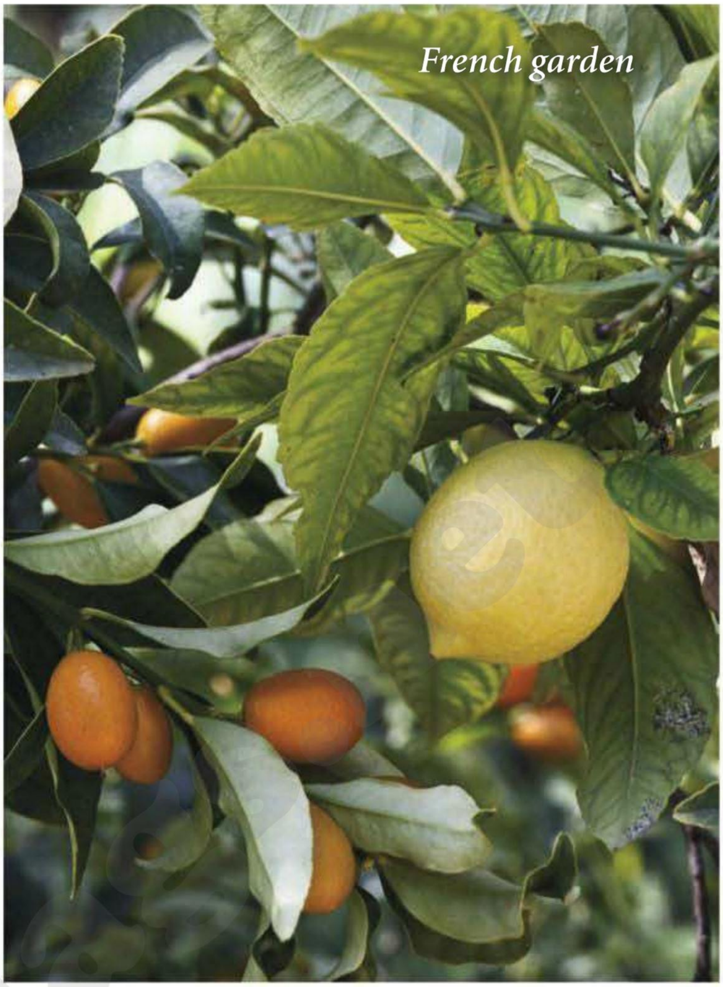
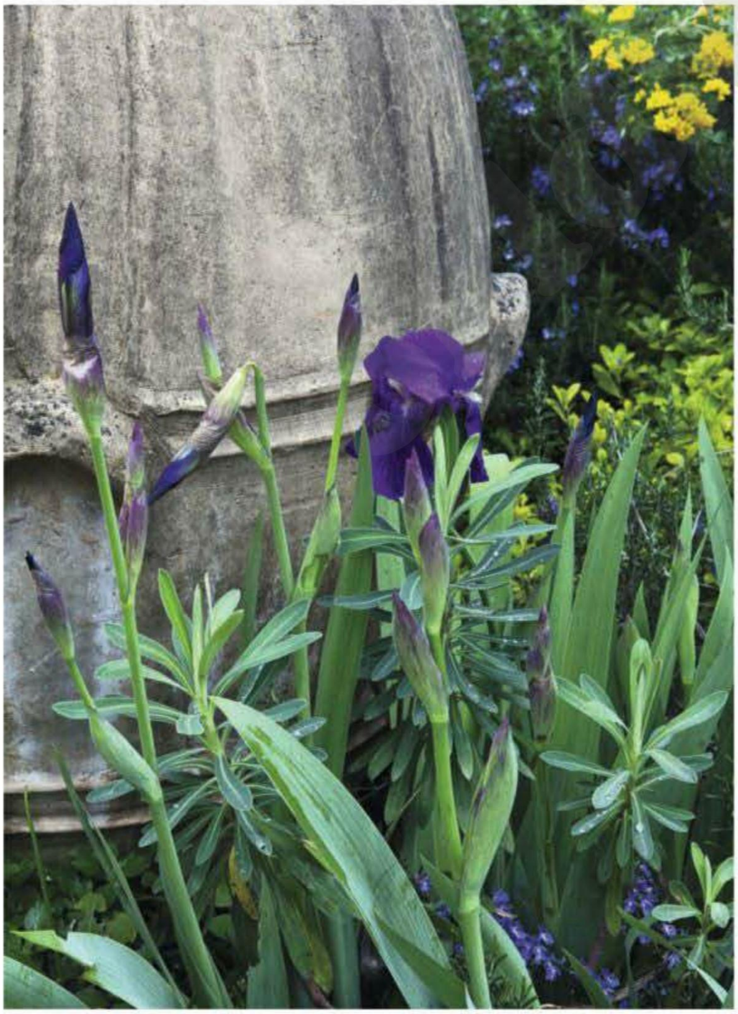
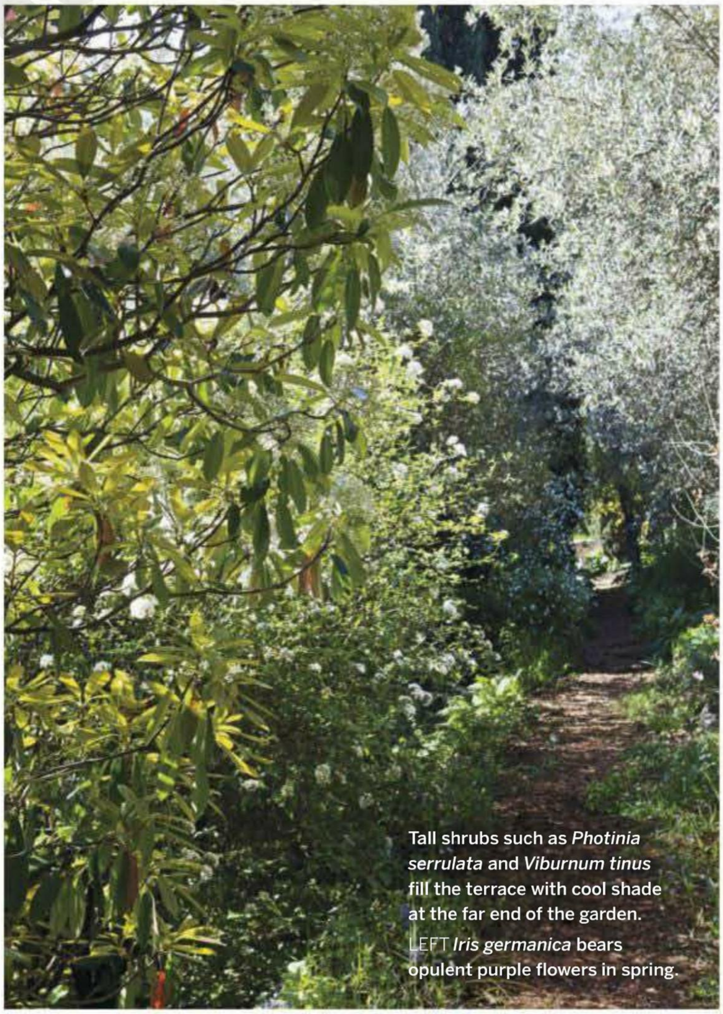


Wide steps link the terraces and courtyards near the house.

RIGHT Lemons and kumquats thrive on the main terrace.







Tall shrubs such as *Photinia serrulata* and *Viburnum tinus* fill the terrace with cool shade at the far end of the garden.

LEFT *Iris germanica* bears opulent purple flowers in spring.

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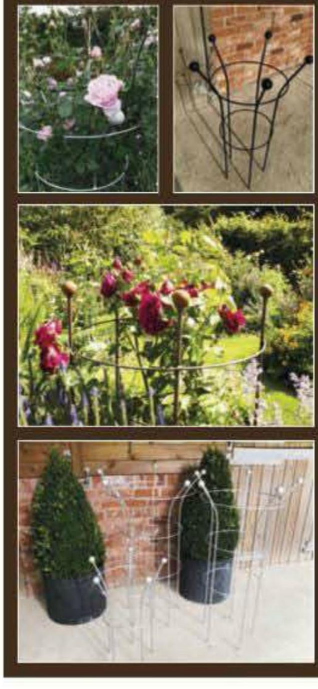
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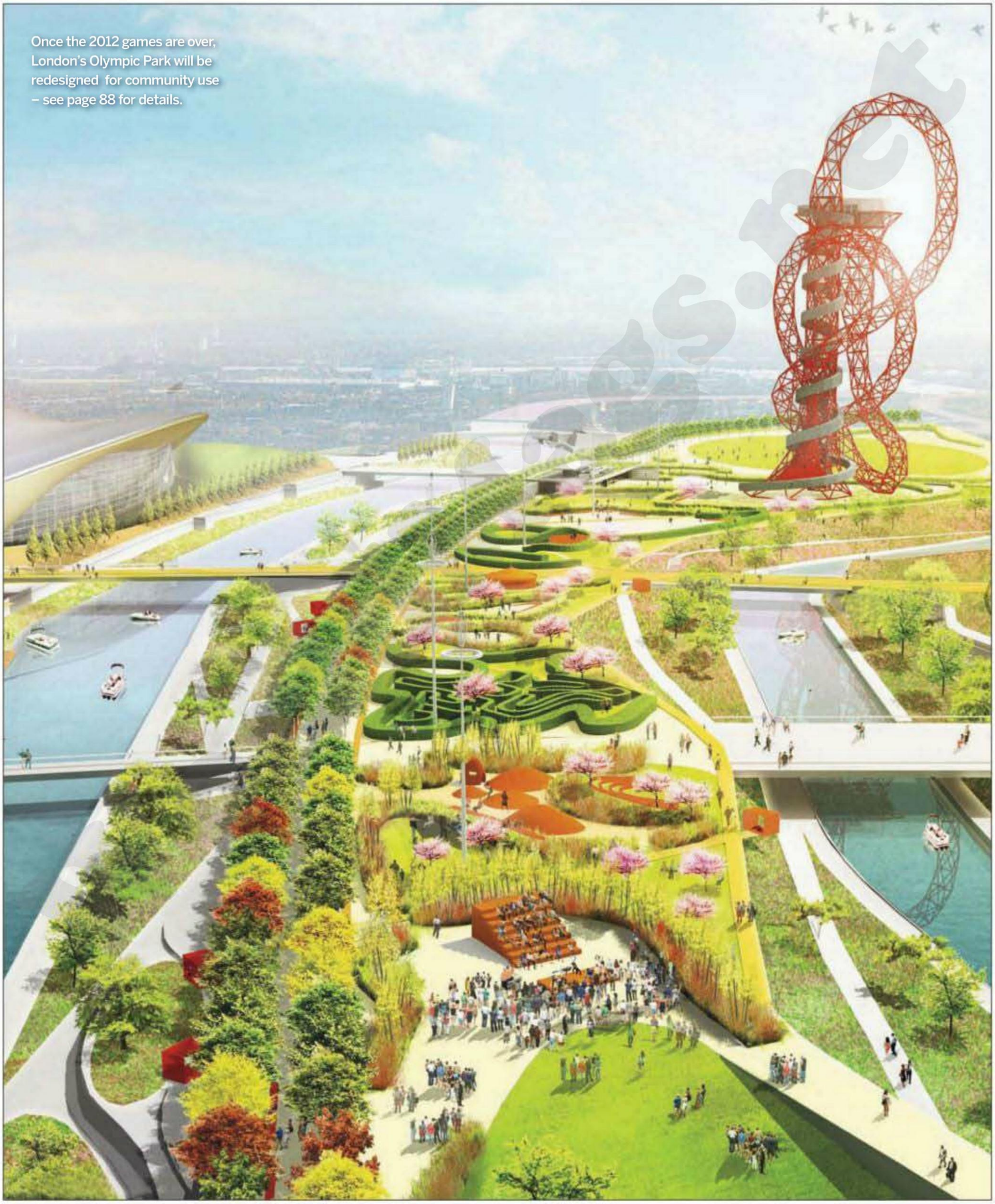

Once the 2012 games are over, London's Olympic Park will be redesigned for community use – see page 88 for details.

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News

COMPILED BY **ANNIE GATTI**

Join the Garden Museum's guided tours and visit seldom-seen private gardens such as Petersham Lodge.

LAURENCE HILL

GARDEN VISITS

Rare chance to see design classics

A programme of one-day garden visits organised by the Garden Museum offers guided tours of rarely seen private gardens by leading designers. The programme starts on 19 April with tours of the London woodland garden of Scheherazade Goldsmith, designed by Mary Keen, and Petersham Lodge (above), by Arabella Lennox-Boyd. In May there are visits to three private gardens in Gloucestershire by Rupert Goldby. In June James Alexander-Sinclair is the guide to two private gardens designed by him in Oxfordshire and to his own family garden in Northamptonshire. Tel 020 7401 8865, www.gardenmuseum.org.uk

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Fulham Park S. W.

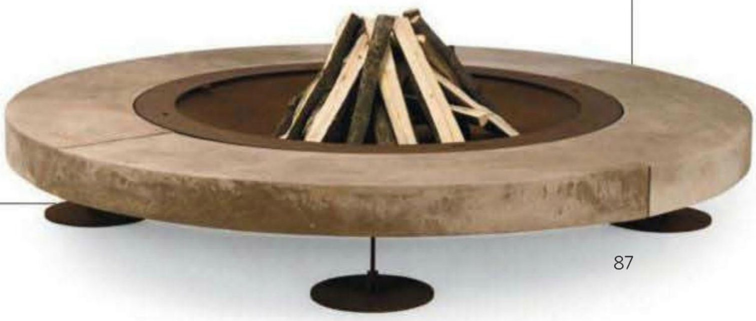
PARKS

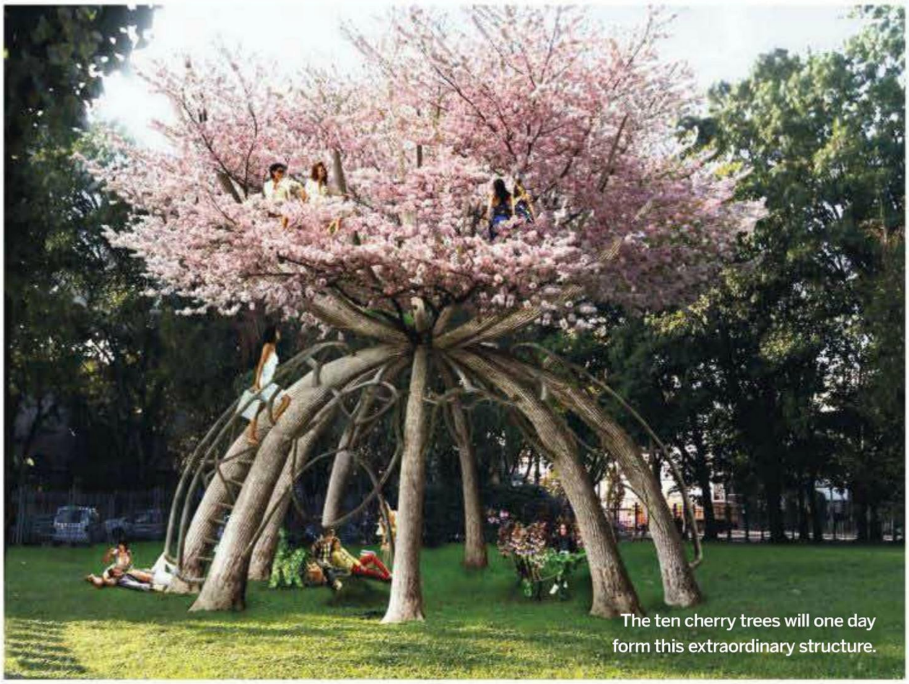
Back to its best

Key elements of the original design of Bishops Park in Fulham, southwest London, have been re-imagined with help from Heritage Lottery Funding. The beach at one end of the lake (pictured above in the early 1900s) has now been separated from the lake by a seat with three small splash-pools on the other side. Read about the park's history at www.friendsofbishopspark.com

FIRE, STONE & STEEL

This oxidised steel fire pit with a generous stone surround is designed by Italian company AK47. It comes with a steel disc that allows it to be used as a table when not lit, and an optional stainless steel grill. Rondo fire pit, 206cm in diameter, 34cm high. £12,822. From The Garden Store, Salcombe, tel 01548 844449, www.thegardenstoresalcombe.co.uk





The ten cherry trees will one day form this extraordinary structure.

INNOVATION

Tree house is a long-term plan

This two-storey 'living building' (pictured above as it should look in about 80 years' time) has been planted at the campus of the Politecnico di Milano in Italy. Ten Japanese cherry trees will be trained to form the structure using a temporary tower. The design was created by Swedish architectural practice Vision Division for a workshop on green design held at the university last autumn.

SARAH BLEE AND J&L GIBBONS

AWARDS

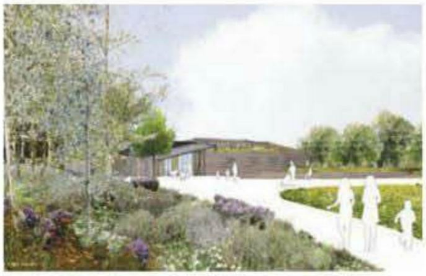
Public spaces transformed

The Landscape Institute has given its 2011 President's Award to London practice J&L Gibbons for 'Making Space in Dalston', ten projects that help residents improve the use of public space. These include a linear vegetable garden and community orchard, new kerbside plantings of hawthorn trees and drought-resistant perennials, and the Eastern Curve community garden (above) on disused railway land, with an oak barn designed by French collective EXYZT.

NEW PROJECTS

Olympic park legacy plans

A competition to design two large areas for the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London has been won by New York-based James Corner Field Operations and London-based Erect Architecture. In the naturalistic North Park, Erect Architecture's design for a community hub building (below) includes play areas that allow for den-building and tree-climbing. In the 50-acre South Park the winning design includes a flexible events space, a promenade edged with a 4m-wide corridor of hedgerow shrubs, trees, grasses and perennials, and pleasure gardens that incorporate a labyrinth (see plans pictured on page 85).



Notebook

- **The organisers of the 2012 Open Garden Squares Weekend** are looking for little-known communal and public gardens in London to take part this year. The closing date is the end of February. www.opensquares.org
- **The Society of Garden Designers** has announced new garden design awards, which are to be given this autumn to SGD-registered and pre-registered members only. For details visit www.sgd.org.uk.
- **Virtual walks through famous parks and public spaces** can now be taken using Street View technology. The High Line in New York, Liberty Park in Jersey City, Kensington Gardens in London and Koganei Park in Japan are all on the site, and more are planned. http://maps.google.com/help/maps/streetview/gallery.html#parks-of-the-world
- **The winter lecture series at Oxford Botanic Garden** continues with James Wong on the gardens of Singapore on 9 February and James Hitchmough on the meadows at the Olympic Park on 22 March. Book via www.oxforduniversitystores.co.uk
- **The RHS London Plant and Design Show** takes place at Horticultural Halls, Westminster, on 14-15 February. Two RHS Young Designer of the Year finalists will create show gardens for alleyways, while the Society of Garden Designers will hold a design clinic. Book at www.rhs.org.uk/londonshows ☐

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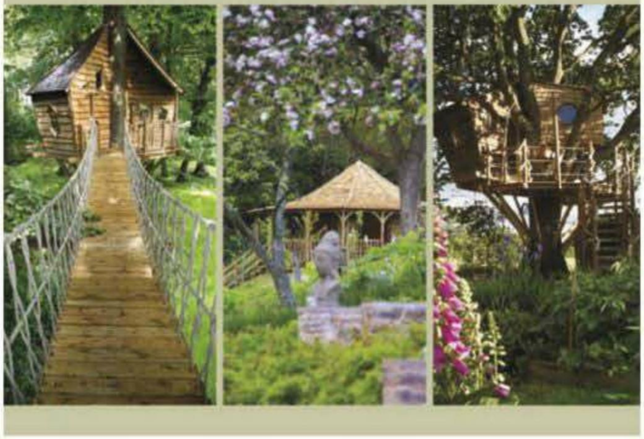

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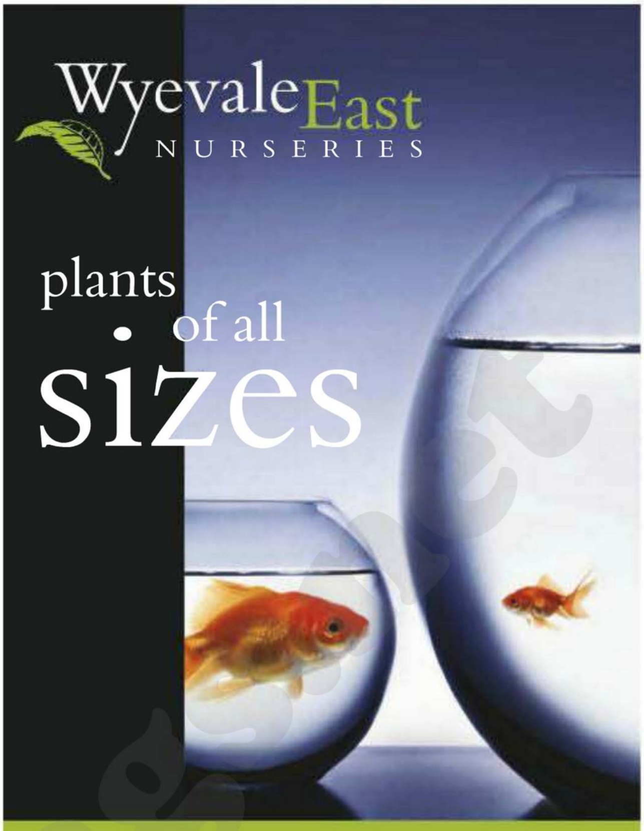

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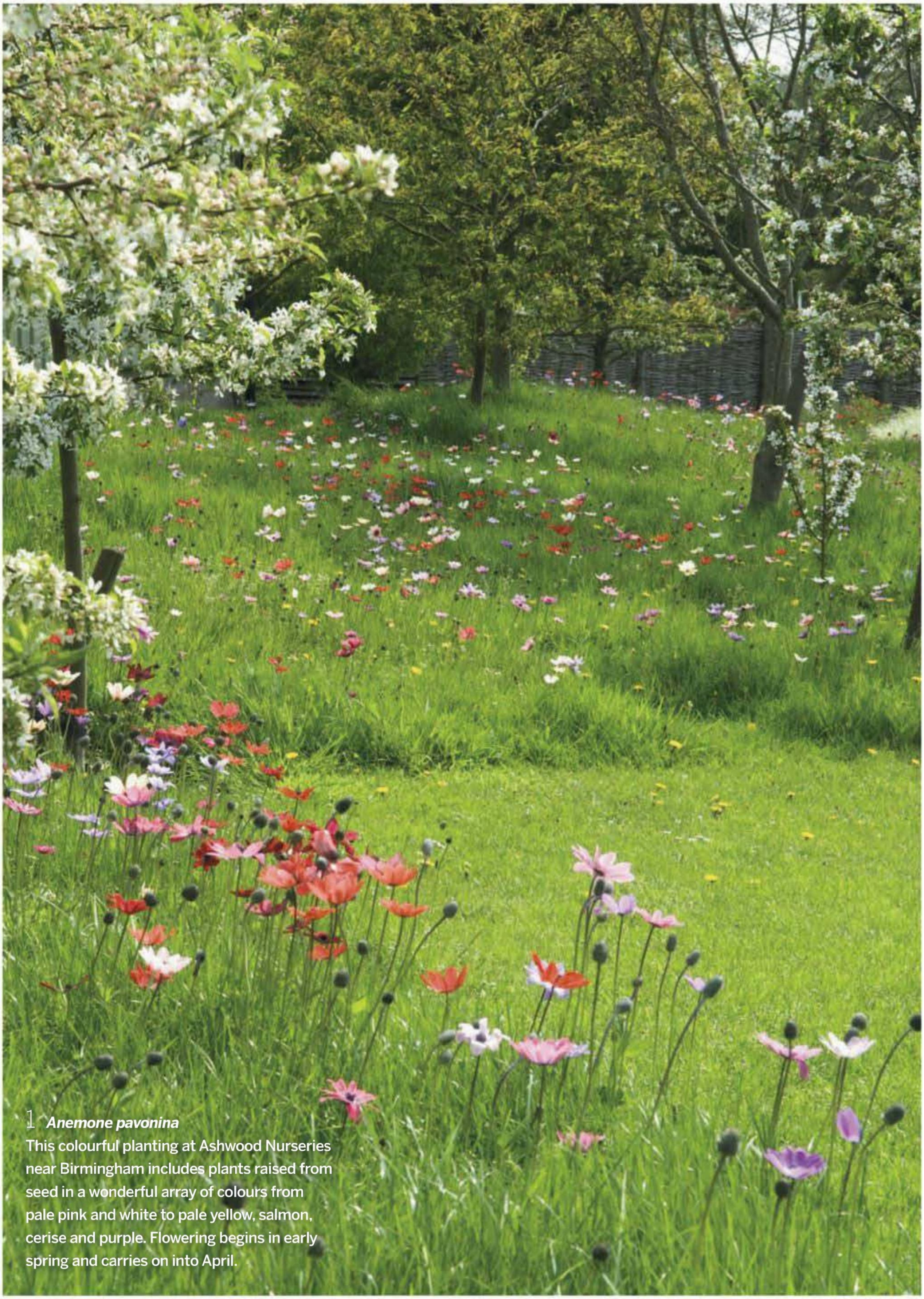


1 ***Anemone pavonina***

This colourful planting at Ashwood Nurseries near Birmingham includes plants raised from seed in a wonderful array of colours from pale pink and white to pale yellow, salmon, cerise and purple. Flowering begins in early spring and carries on into April.

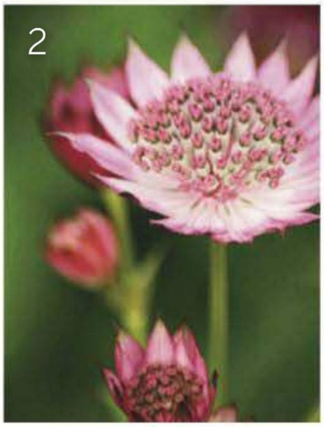
MICHAEL KING/GAP PHOTOS

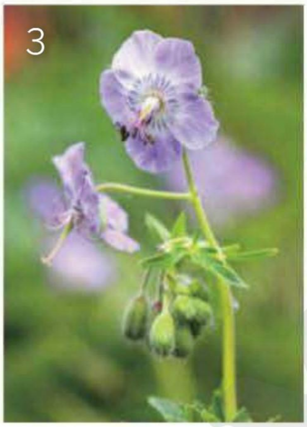
Arne Maynard is a leading garden designer based in London and Monmouthshire

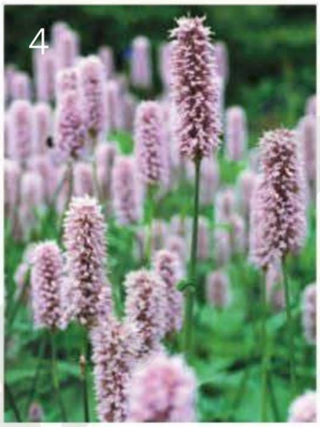
Meadows by design

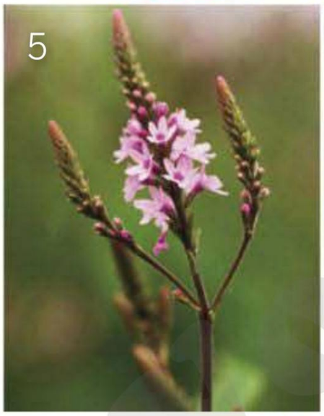
Areas of long grass filled with flowers not only look lovely but help define the structure and atmosphere of your garden

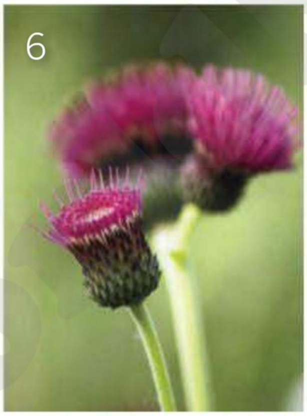
WORDS ARNE MAYNARD

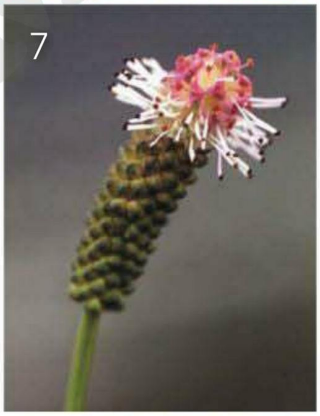


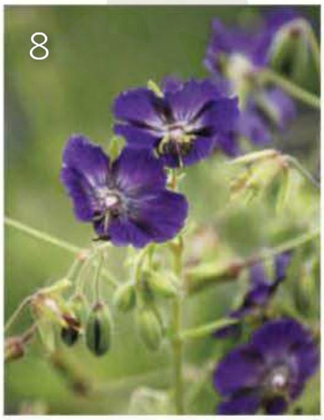


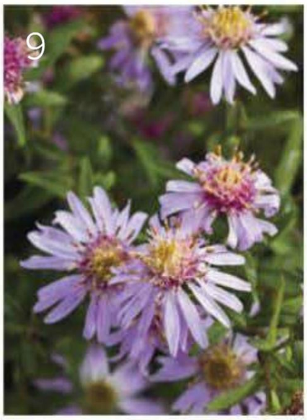


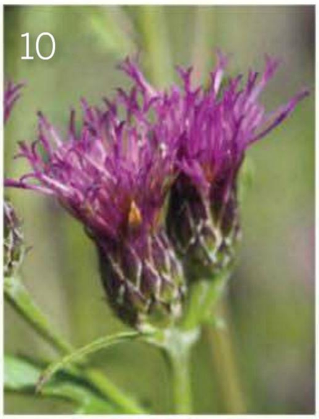












2 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER, 3 FHF GREENMEDIA / GAP PHOTOS, 4 LINDSEY STOCK / ALAMY, 5-9 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER, 10 WILDLIFE GMBH / ALAMY

Meadow plants

Herbaceous plants that are native to long grass environments can be used selectively to create beautiful, ornamental meadows.

2 ***Astrantia* 'Roma'** bears glowing pink flowers for weeks, between May and September.

3 ***Geranium phaeum* 'Walküre'** bears soft-blue flowers that look beautiful with other cool colours.

4 ***Persicaria bistorta* 'Superba'** produces pale pink flower spikes from dense leaf clumps; it needs a moist soil.

5 ***Verbena hastata* f. *rosea*** has tall, transparent branching spires of clear pink flowers.

6 ***Cirsium rivulare* 'Atropurpureum'** is a striking crimson thistle, at its best in moist soils.

7 ***Sanguisorba officinalis* 'Pink Tanna'** bears masses of small pink flower heads on wiry stems.

8 ***Geranium phaeum* 'Lily Lovell'** is, like other dusky cranesbills, ideal for shade. This cultivar bears purple-mauve flowers in May and June.

9 ***Aster* 'Coombe Fishacre'** Clumps of lilac-pink flowers from late summer to autumn.

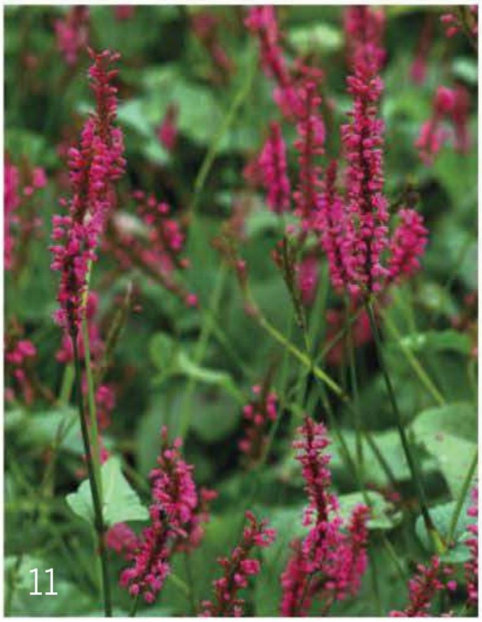
10 ***Serratula tinctoria*** Saw wort is a meadow and grassland plant of the aster family.

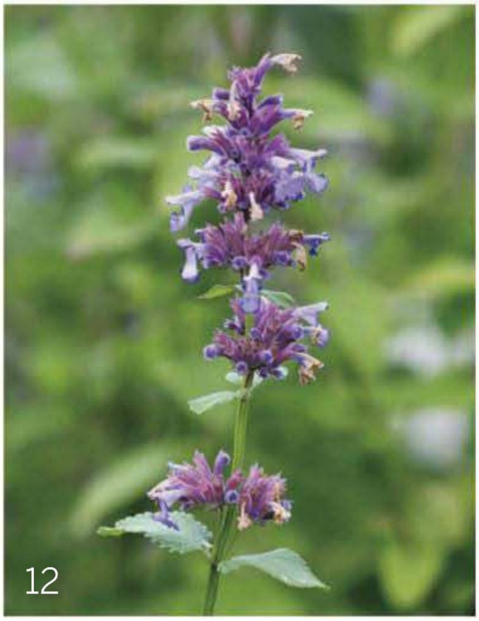
11 ***Persicaria amplexicaulis*** Vigorous, clump-forming perennial that produces deep red, pink or white flowers on stems up to 1.2m tall, from midsummer to early autumn. Prefers moist soil in sun or partial shade.

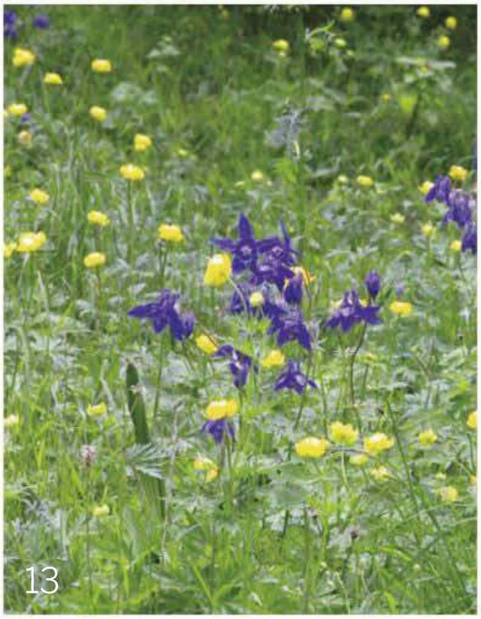
12 ***Nepeta grandiflora* 'Pool Bank'** has grey-green leaves and branching spires of purple-blue flowers. Use to create a soft, hazy effect. Upright and bushy, up to 1m tall, plants flower from July through to September.

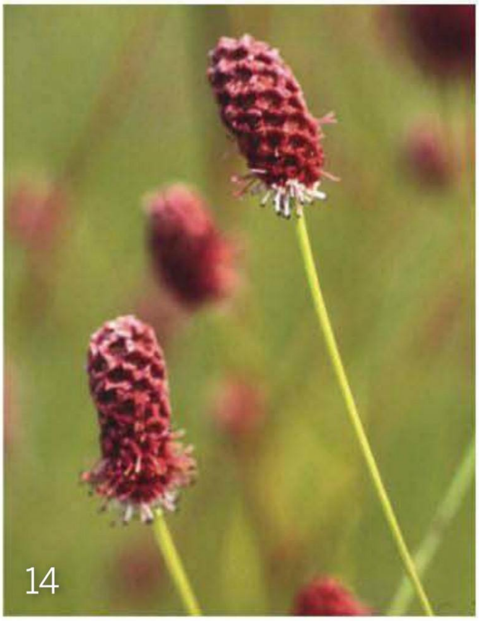
13 ***Aquilegia vulgaris*** Nature is often the best inspiration. Here, in the long grass of a native wildflower meadow in Slovenia, deep purple-blue aquilegias combine with yellow trollius.

14 ***Sanguisorba* 'Tanna'** introduces spots of intense, jewel-like colour into long-grass gardens. The blue-grey leaves add another layer of interest and this plant is also a magnet for bees and butterflies. Flowers from June to September.









11 DEREK HARRIS / ALAMY, 12 IMAGE FLORA, 13 WILLIAM COLLINSON, 14 & 15 WILLOUGHBY DYER

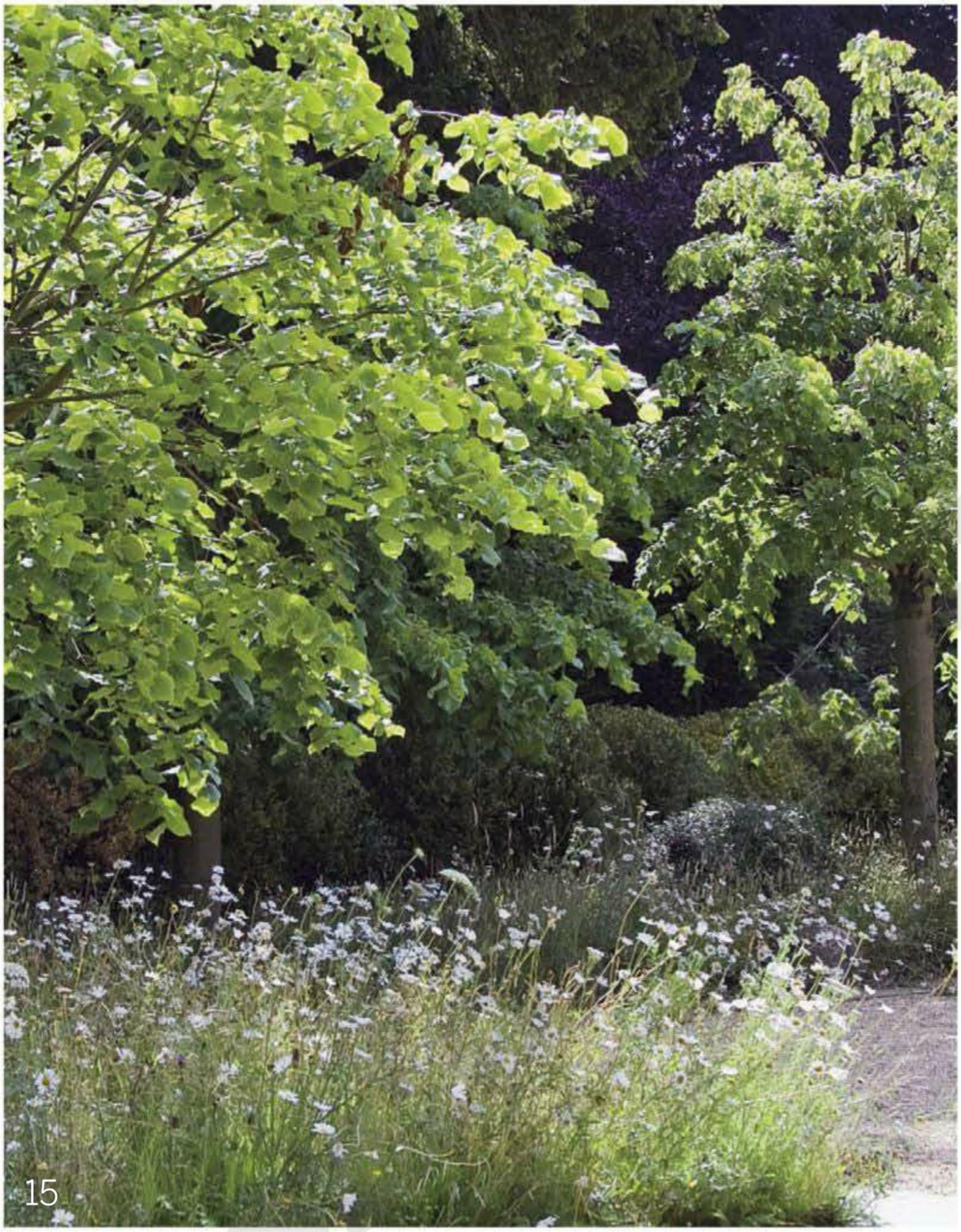
Many of our loveliest border plants have their wild origins in flower meadows. When planted in long grass they can make dazzling and sophisticated meadows inspired by nature, but designed for gardens.

The long-grass garden is a lovely device for creating a relaxed atmosphere and softening the edges where the garden meets the bigger landscape. But long grass can be used in a variety of other ways in gardens – as a contrast to formal elements and to help define the garden's structure.

The most obvious kind of wildflower meadow is a native mixture with ox-eye daisies, which you can sow from a seed mix. This is fantastic, but I'd like to concentrate on *designed* meadows that are inspired by nature. That's what I'm doing in my own garden. It is not a place for formal herbaceous borders, but I still want to use certain favourite plants, and designed meadows are a beautiful way of creating a garden with flowers but without borders.

I started by sowing a mix of grasses to form a matrix, using species that are not too competitive. Now the grass is established, I'm beginning to plant into it. My inspiration has been native wildflower meadows in Slovenia [see 13, above].

Many of the plants we commonly use in our gardens – astrantias, sanguisorbas, persicarias and asters – are actually native meadow plants, or relatives of them. Long ago we plucked them from the wild and put them into our herbaceous borders; now



15 **Wildflower turf** can be used to offset and soften a line of hedging and formal tree planting, as in this Wiltshire garden. Each element, both formal and informal, is enhanced by the juxtaposition.

I want to put them back into their natural meadow environment. I want to create a natural and relaxed way of using them. Looking at wild meadows helps me work out what I want to put into my grass matrix and design it to be themed by season, or by colour.

For a rich, bejewelled meadow, plant *Astrantia major* 'Claret' with *Sanguisorba* 'Tanna' and, if it's damp enough, *Cirsium rivulare*. Or have beautiful, smoky, pale pinks and lilacs using *Geranium phaeum* 'Walküre', *Cirsium heterophyllum* and pink persicaria. Or pure white with *Geranium phaeum* 'Album', ox-eye daisies (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and white fritillarias (such as *F. meleagris* f. *alba*) for spring. It's not a new idea. These bejewelled meadows are like the intricate flowery meads you see depicted in Elizabethan tapestries. But by selecting single colours, you can create quite a contemporary feel.

Maintenance is easy. At the end of summer, cut it down like a hay meadow, and keep cutting back until November or December, but no shorter than 5cm, to avoid damaging the crowns of the plants. Next year, when it all comes up again, you should get a balance of plants seeding and re-establishing.

Ordinarily, one thinks of meadows being spring and summer-flowering, but you can make a wonderfully atmospheric autumn meadow with asters, another natural meadow plant, planted among teasels in long grass.□

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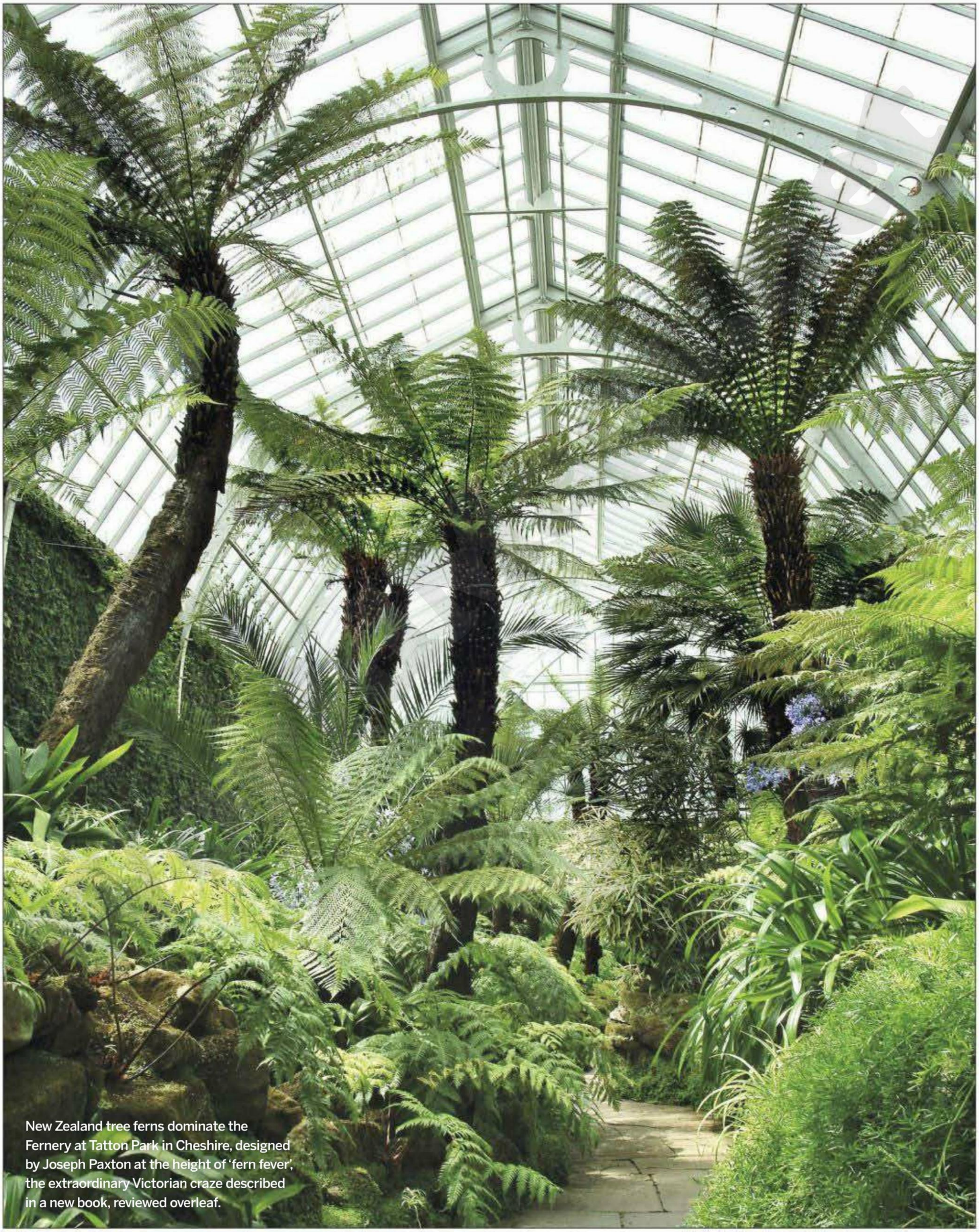
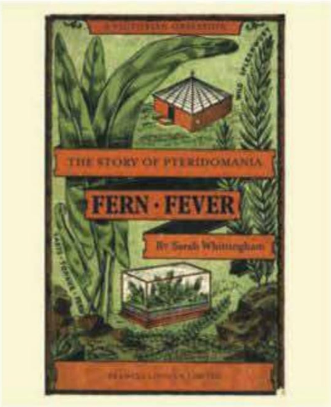


New Zealand tree ferns dominate the Fernery at Tatton Park in Cheshire, designed by Joseph Paxton at the height of 'fern fever', the extraordinary Victorian craze described in a new book, reviewed overleaf.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE LITTLER, REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF TATTON PARK. FROM *FERN FEVER: THE STORY OF PTERIDOMANIA* BY SARAH WHITTINGHAM, PUBLISHED BY FRANCES LINCOLN

Book reviews



FERN-FEVER: The story of pteridomania

by Sarah Whittingham
Frances Lincoln, £35
ISBN 978-0711230705

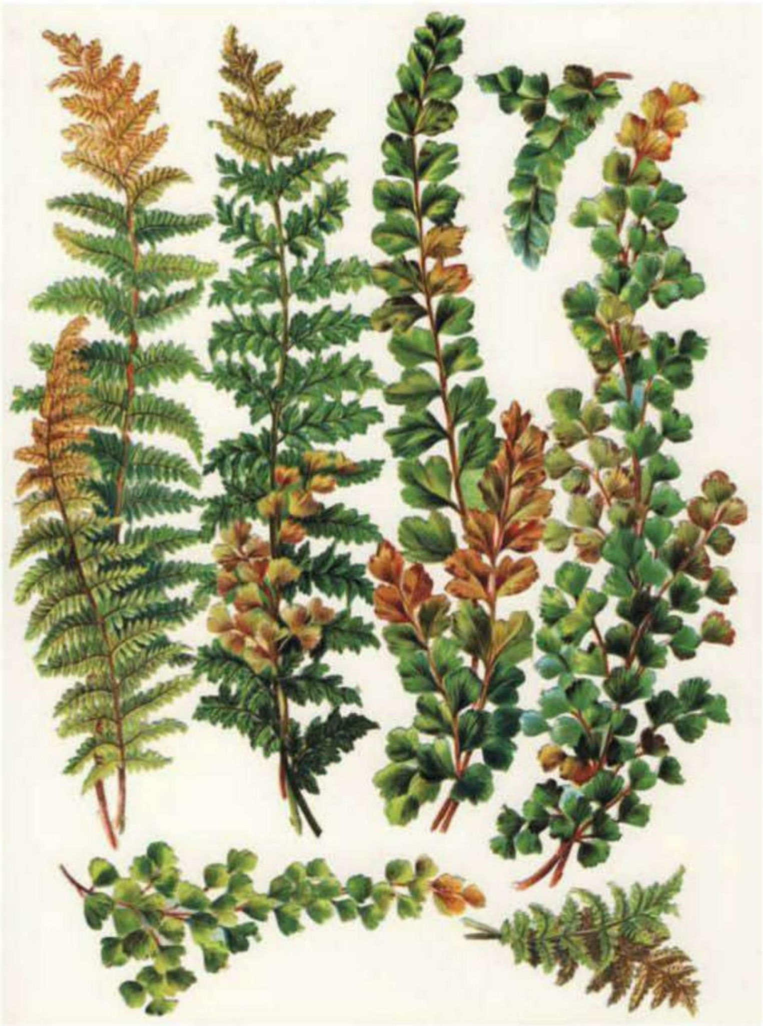


IMAGE FROM *FERN-FEVER* BY SARAH WHITTINGHAM

The Victorian craze for ferns began in the late 1830s and they were still popular in the 1890s, when this image was produced by publishers Raphael Tuck & Sons.

Twenty-first century gardeners interested in the Victorian fascination for collections of particular kinds of plants should look no further for insight than Sarah Whittingham's new book. The reader will soon appreciate however, that to consider ferns only as plant collecting fodder would be to significantly underestimate the associated fever – pteridomania – that gripped this nation from 1830, and lasting into the next century.

As one would expect, Whittingham initially explores the history of ferns from the perspective of planthunting. Many well-known botanists, planthunters and garden writers of the day are represented, including Nathaniel Ward.

Whittingham's examination of the wider fascination for ferns reveals a fresh insight into the period's social history, always an essential anchor for plant and garden history. In the introduction she asks why plants that don't flower should have stirred such national passion, concluding that the study of ferns satisfied middle-class fascination with natural history and the Wonders of the Natural World.

Ferns were popular with influential philanthropists and Christian teachers who viewed them as Godly plants that had survived for millions of years while bearing none of the showy, vulgar characteristics of flowering plants. They were thought to be suitable collections for children and women, and Whittingam reveals examples of female pteridologists whose research was published and gained significant peer respect.

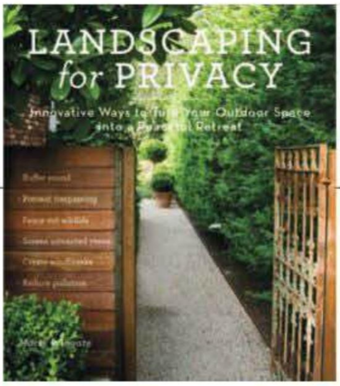
The beautifully illustrated chapter on 'Ferns for All' is a treasure trove of high Victorian domestic imagery. From fireplaces to furniture, glass to porcelain, fern fronds decorated Victorian homes in elaborate detail. Examples of greetings cards, clothing, tombstones and architecture all bear fern imprints and leave the reader in no doubt of the pop-star like cult of these plants throughout the Victorian period.

There is much to learn from this book, not only about ferns but about a period in British history that continues to influence a nation's culture to this day. It is written with great clarity, is beautifully illustrated and – a fact often ignored – skilfully edited, by Jane Crawley.

Anne Jennings is a garden and landscape designer and writer.

book offer

RRP £35. **Reader offer price £32.50** including p&p.


LANDSCAPING for PRIVACY
Innovative Ways to Turn Your Outdoor Space into a Peaceful Retreat
Marty Wingate

LANDSCAPING FOR PRIVACY

by Marty Wingate

Timber Press, £12.99
ISBN 978-1604691238

Landscaping for privacy is an increasingly important subject given that new-build homes have less and less space around them, so we are more overlooked. Intrusions into our comfort zones are more prevalent, from ill-mannered corner-cutting to traffic noise, children, dogs, or simply being overlooked.

Seattle-based author Marty Wingate's *Landscaping for Privacy* is a welcome book that may well make you rethink past ideas on what constitutes privacy.

It's an uptight, British thing to think of privacy as fencing-in and screening-out. Northern Europeans and North Americans are far more open in their approach. Partly because they have more space per capita, maybe because they're less uptight, but possibly it all boils down to quiet inner confidence – which this book has in spades.

The book of course has an American look and feel, but you can always take on the bigger picture, which includes chapters on softening the impact of nuisances; deterring 'invasion'; and screening unwanted sights. Definitely something for your shelf, whether you're an amateur gardener or a professional designer.

Rob Cassy is a journalist and author of several gardening books.

book offer

RRP £12.99. **Reader offer price £11.99** including p&p.

THE FRUIT TREE HANDBOOK

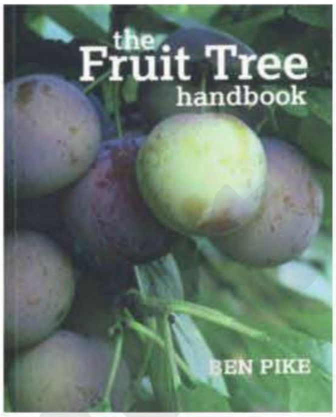
by Ben Pike

Green Books, £16.95
ISBN 978-1900322744

This comprehensive practical guide to growing fruit trees is well written and attractively presented, with good illustrations and photos. It does not assume any prior knowledge and as such is useful to those who are new to the subject. But the depth of coverage means that it is also valuable for those who already have some experience. It can be used as a reference book but also makes a good read, cover to cover.

The book is organised into four parts, the first three of which take the reader through all aspects of growing fruit trees in a logical sequence.

Part one deals with preliminary subjects such as planning sites and buying and planting trees. As a nurseryman I am regularly asked questions on these subjects by new customers. The book is impressively in touch with many of the questions posed by novice fruit-growers.



Part two deals with the actual growing of fruit trees, covering such subjects as pruning, to which the author adopts a refreshingly new approach. Instead of the normal prescriptive set of instructions which often leave the reader confused, it concentrates on the principles. While this is undoubtedly the best approach, the coverage of the principles and their connection to the actual practice of pruning is too sketchy to make it work as well as it should.

Part three covers all aspects of the growing of each individual fruit species in detail. It includes very useful and thoughtfully selected lists and descriptions of recommended varieties for each fruit species.

The final part deals with restoration of old orchards and establishment of community orchards, two subjects of increasing interest, particularly to those involved in conservation of local heritage.

There are very few books currently available on growing fruit trees. This is a good new book published at a time of increasing interest in the subject that will help to fill this void. It is well worth investing in if you are or plan to become an amateur fruit grower.

Hamid Habibi is owner of Keepers Nursery, which offers one of the largest selections of fruits trees in world.

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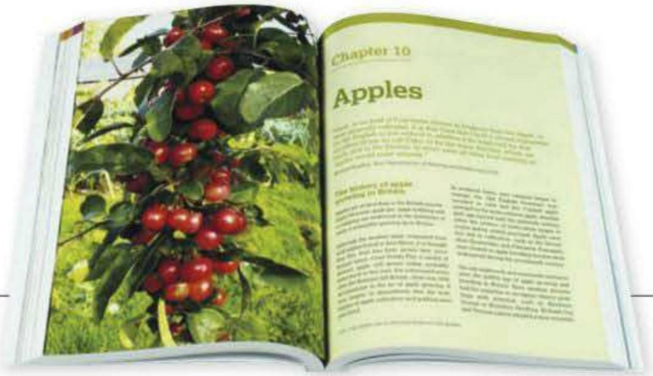
RRP £16.95. **Reader offer price £15.95** including p&p.


Chapter 10

Apples

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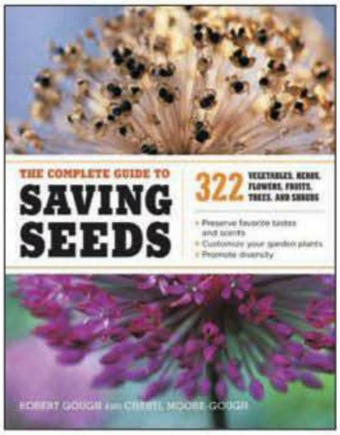
Book reviews

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO SAVING SEEDS: 322 vegetables, herbs, flowers, fruits, trees and shrubs

by Robert Gough and Cheryl Moore-Gough

Storey, £16.99, ISBN 978-1603425742


THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO
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322 VEGETABLES, HERBS, FLOWERS, FRUITS, TREES, AND SHRUBS
Preserve favorite tastes and scents
Customize your garden plants
Promote diversity
ROBERT GOUGH AND CHERYL MOORE-GOUGH

With my Yorkshire streak of thrift (not meanness, you understand), I love growing plants from seed that I've collected for free. This has allowed me to raise 20 or 30 specimens of a plant rather than the meagre three, five or seven I might purchase from a nursery. I get pleasure from giving my surpluses away, but the real magic is watching my seeds germinate into real plants. That has been a thrill for 40 years.

However, some seeds are trickier than others and this excellent book unravels the mysteries. The fact that the authors garden in America doesn't matter as far as raising seeds goes. It tells me, for instance, that trillium seeds (which I find really tricky) need a stratification period to remove radicle (root) dormancy, then a warm period in which the roots can grow. This cycle of stratification and warmth has to be repeated for a second year before epicotyl dormancy (when cotyledons go on to produce true seed leaves) can be broken. Don't be afraid of the big scientific words: they are clearly explained in the glossary at the back.

Species peonies are another difficulty here. The advice is clear. Harvest when dry and mature and remove the seed coating to scarify the seed, before sowing in moist sand outdoors. Gardeners are warned that seeds often take a year before they begin to grow. Penstemons need surface sowing in temperatures of 4°C. Perennial phloxes like up to 50 dark days at a much warmer 20°C. Aquilegias, which can self-seed like crazy in the garden, are described as erratic when sown by the gardener.

There are sections on saving and raising herb and vegetable seeds plus another on woody plants. Plant breeding is also explained. But the most useful sections for a gardener are on germination (which deals with dormancy) and sowing and raising seeds. It's valuable information, backed up by science, and I know that I shall refer to this book again and again.

Val Bourne is a garden writer, photographer and lecturer.

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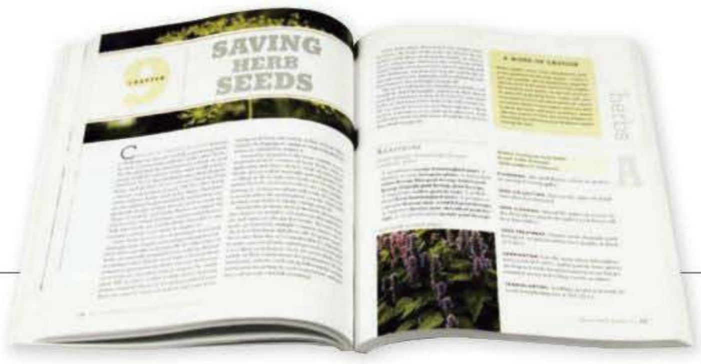

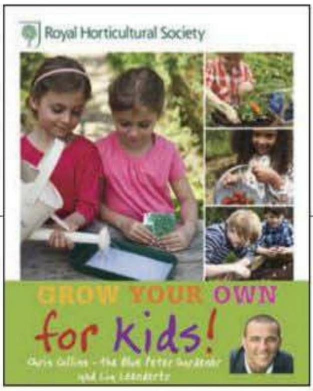
Royal Horticultural Society
GROW YOUR OWN
for Kids!
Chris Collins – the Blue Peter Gardener and Lia Leendertz

GROW YOUR OWN FOR KIDS

by Chris Collins and Lia Leendertz

RHS/Mitchell Beazley, £12.99

ISBN 978-1845335106

Recent reports suggest that many children now know more about gardening than their parents. This must in part be thanks to the RHS Campaign for School Gardening which, since 2007, has helped 10,000 schools make their own gardens.

Blue Peter gardener Chris Collins has been a front man among the public faces backing the campaign, and now he has collaborated with writer Lia Leendertz to produce an RHS title aimed at younger readers.

Grow Your Own For Kids is an excellent attempt to engage five to 11-year-olds, and even has plenty to appeal to my three pre-teens. There are engaging photographs, fun projects, science facts and an emphasis on growing things to eat but, perhaps inevitably, this is a book that will mainly be read by adults and relayed to youngsters. But this is not a criticism. It covers the basics clearly and concisely, from simple soil analysis to an 'Oh no! What has happened?' trouble-shooting section. It made the simple but brilliant suggestion that cut-and-come-again salad can be sown to spell your name, and it taught me that lager is better than bitter in a slug pub. It should produce a bumper harvest of green-fingered young gardeners.

Jodie Jones is a gardening journalist and author.

book offer

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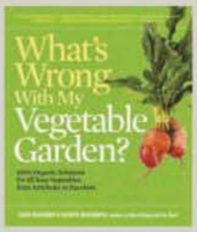
other recently released books for gardeners



WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY VEGETABLE GARDEN?
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Organic ways to fight attacks by pests and diseases.
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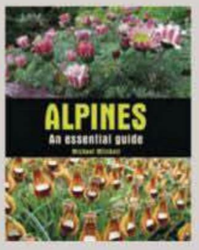
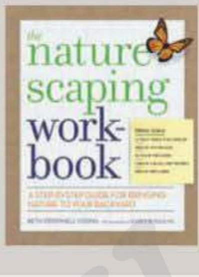


ALPINES: AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE
by Michael Mitchell
Advice from the owner of Slack Top, one of the UK's leading alpine nurseries.
Crowood, £19.95
ISBN 978-1847972958



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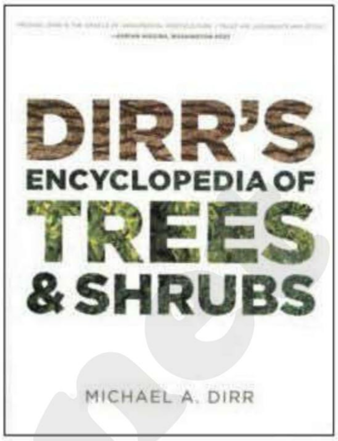
DIRR'S ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TREES & SHRUBS

by Michael A Dirr
Timber Press, £50
ISBN 978-0881929010



Nearly all tree enthusiasts across the globe will own a tree or shrub book by Michael Dirr. One of the most respected tree experts in the USA, he is the author of two classic reference books, *Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs* and *Dirr's Trees and Shrubs for Warm Climates*. I have both at home and use them all the time.

Dirr's Encyclopedia of Trees & Shrubs is a compendium of both these books, brought right up to date by the author. It covers some 380 genera and 3,700 species and cultivars of both deciduous and evergreen woody plants.

This book has been written primarily for the American market, with imperial measurements and many references to trees he has observed in US states, towns and gardens, with typical North American hardiness zones added; but this does not detract from the quality and usefulness of the text to the European reader. In fact many of the cultivars he describes are unavailable in English nurseries, but hopefully they will be made available in the near future.

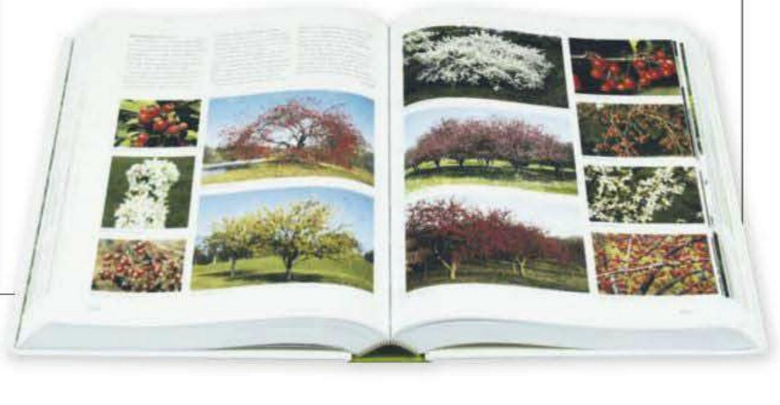
Dirr has his own writing style, which is fun, entertaining, a joy to read, easy to understand and easy to relate to and still extremely factual. This huge volume, weighing in at just under 3kg, is not just an identification guide, but also provides clear cultivation and growing tips for each plant, from Dirr's personal experiences. More than 3,500 useful colour photographs of a good size are spread throughout the book, showing various attributes such as leaf colour, flower, fruit, habit and many more. In the back of the book there is one of the best plant selection guides I have come across in any book to help any amateur or professional gardener, and two substantial indexes.

This book is another great-value offering from the Timber Press stable and provides both identification and cultivation information on many plants that can't be found in any other woody encyclopedia on the bookshelf. ☐

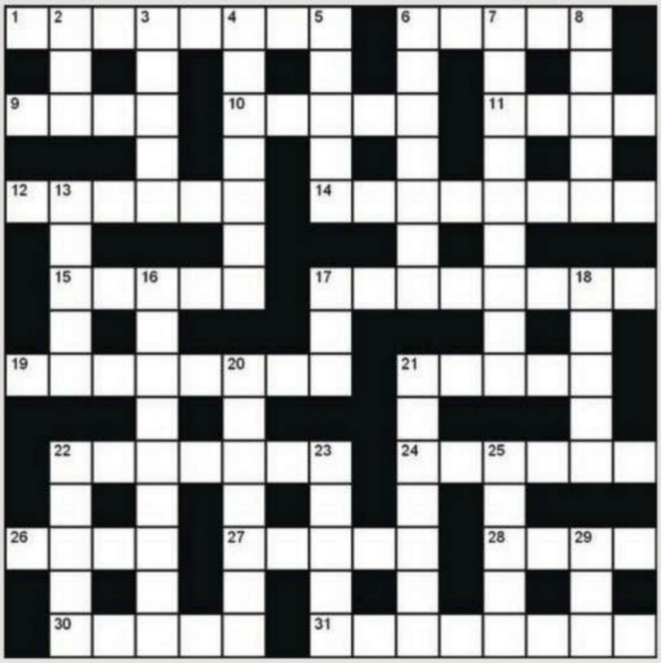
Tony Kirkham is head of arboretum at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

book offer

RRP £50. **Reader offer price £45** including p&p.



Crossword



ACROSS

1 Intertwines hedge branches (prize initially, Chelsea, perhaps) (8)
6 Blow this wild flower of the mint family! (5)
9 Linden tree, not liked by ericaceous plants! (4)
10 Gardener Klein's first bit of escarole (5)
11 That of a hyacinth is sword-shaped (4)
12 Talk to the chooser of 100 must-have garden plants in this issue! (6)
14 One of several plant diseases – produced by ex-PM? Nonsense! (5,3)
15 Gardening icon, Rosemary, really holding tip of endive (5)
17 Term meaning tendril-bearing – rich rose, oddly (8)
19 John Grimshaw of Colesbourne Park is an expert on this bulb (8)
21 Flavour in hostas, terrible! (5)
22 Possibly see icon as plant genus of eg ragwort and cineraria (7)
24 Du Maurier's first plant genus profiled by Roy Lancaster (6)
26 Two ... fruit of *Pyrus communis*, it's said (4)
27 Bit of coldness removes end from a capsicum (5)
28 Popular Verdi opera, *Rhododendron* variety (4)
30 Turnip-related vegetable also called rutabaga (5)
31 Chris of our current 'Nurseryman's choice' (8)

DOWN

2 Flower garland ... made from ends of local orange narcissi (3)
3 Representative part of corolla, gentian (5)
4 North American nut tree in the *Carya* genus (7)
5 Woody plant – hidden by marsh rubbish (5)
6 Lady ___ at the forefront of the organic movement (7)
7 Genus of winter bulbs – there's a collection at Suffolk's Gable House (9)
8 Variety of rhododendron hidden in *Gerbera tomentosa* (5)
13 Possess, end of garden, place of safety/peace (5)
16 Dispersed water on, er, a member of *Sorbus* genus (5,4)
17 Edible mushroom found in lettuce patch (3)
18 Lustre, as on plum tree leaves with silver leaf disease (5)
20 eg make new use of composted garden waste (7)
21 Not much of eg a plant – after time, riddle out (7)
22 Breaks antirrhinums, in short (5)
23 It's poppy's produce, dope! (5)
25 Soft stone fruit such as 'Peregrine' and 'Duke of York' (5)
29 Gardener Monty's last Mafia boss? (3)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

JANUARY'S SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 *Mimulus*; **5** Muddy; **8** *Acacia*; **9** *Eryngium*; **10** Elms; **11** Maple; **12** Tool; **13** Bamboo; **15** High Line; **17** Kerrias; **18** Insect; **20** Bays; **21** Salad; **23/7** Grow your own; 24 Straggly; **25** Orache; **26** Avens; **27** *Rhamnus*. **DOWN: 1** Mycelia; **2** Mucus; **3** Lia; **4** Steep; **5** Maybe; **6** *Digitalis*; **11** Mooli; **14** Barnsdale; **15** Has; **16** Grind; **17** *Knautia*; **19** Cloches; **21** Sages; **22** Layer; **23** Grain; **25** Ova.

DECEMBER'S BUMPER CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 *Helleborus*; **7** Fumigate; **11** Ha-ha; **12** Tangelo; **13/4** Star of Bethlehem; **14** *Astilbe*; **15** *Potentilla*; **16** Ants; **17** *Hosta*; **19** Dibbled; **22** Salt; marsh; **25** Kirkham; **27** Gloves; **30** Pilei; **31** Divide; **32** Mullein; **33** *Echeveria*; **36** Orpheus; **39** Spoor; **41** Butt; **42** Underplant; **46** Eve Price; **47** Egmont; **48** Banksia; **49** Iron; **50** Stafford; **51** Cow-parsley. **DOWN: 2** *Elaeagnus*; **3** Lean-tos; **5** Runners; **6** Sweep; **7** Frosted; **8** Mason; **9** Glacial; **10** Troll; **18** Achilleas; **20** Bored; **21** Domed; **23** Level; **24** Ripen; **25** Keith; **26** Hover; **28** Limbo; **29** Swede; **34** Variegata; **35** Artichoke; **37** Peel off; **38** Slabbed; **40** Oversow; **41** Berries; **43** Night; **44** Patio; **45** Tonic.

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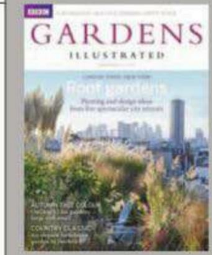
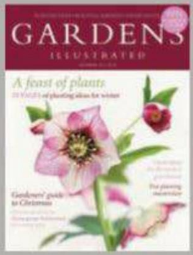
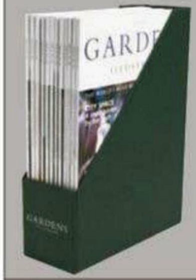


NOVEMBER 2011
Five inspiring roof gardens; The best trees for autumn colour; A designer's farmhouse garden in Norfolk; Profile of the mountain ash genus, *Sorbus*.



DECEMBER 2011
Tree-planting masterclass; Tom Stuart-Smith's tips on designing gardens for summer and winter; Holly profile; Gorgeous hellebores.

JANUARY 2012
Self-sowing plants; Piet Oudolf planting for New York's High Line park; A brief history of grow your own; Beautiful borders at Godinton House in Sussex.



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2011 – January, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December issues available (February has sold out)

- SORRY, issues published more than 12 months ago are no longer available.

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BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

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Visit www.classical-music.com today to vote and enter our prize draw to win a limited edition Kemble Centennial piano worth £7,000!

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Reader offers

Offer one

Win a unique Cornish garden break at a luxury hotel

The Nare Hotel is set in an idyllic location on Cornwall's Roseland Peninsula; (below left) Trebah's hydrangeas in full bloom; (below right) the maze at Glendurgan.

BRIAN AND NINA CHAPPLE

Cornwall's mild climate, beautiful countryside and stunning coastline mean that this southwestern tip of the country has plenty of outstanding gardens for enthusiasts and visitors to explore and enjoy. Enter our competition and you could win a unique experience of a two-night stay for two at one of Cornwall's finest country house hotels by the sea, plus exclusive behind-the-scenes tours of the sub-tropical paradises of Glendurgan and Trebah Garden.

THE PRIZE **The Nare Hotel** is superbly located on the scenic Roseland Peninsula, overlooking a beach with perfect sea views and within easy reach of Cornwall's finest gardens. The hotel has excellent standards of comfort, luxury and service and has been rated by the AA as the best hotel in Cornwall every year for the last 15 years. The prize offers a two-night stay including bed, breakfast, afternoon tea and dinner for two people.

At **Glendurgan** on the Helford River you'll discover a jungle-like lower valley filled with sub-topical plants contrasting with arid plants basking on the sunny upper slopes. There's also a huge tulip tree and a good collection of rhododendrons and camellias. Here, you'll be given an exclusive guided tour with the head gardener.

Trebah is a paradise for plant lovers. The result of 160 years of inspired gardening, this sub-tropical haven is set against a stunning coastal backdrop. Lush plantings include collections of palms and tree ferns, candelabra primulas and massed hydrangeas. You'll learn the history of Trebah by exploring the garden with its archivist, then join a private tour with the head gardener. To end your day you'll enjoy a Cornish cream tea on the private terrace, offering the best view of the garden from the house, down the valley to the Helford.

Find out more about The Nare and its spring garden breaks at **www.narehotel.co.uk**, Glendurgan at **www.nationaltrust.org.uk/glendurgan** and Trebah at **www.trebahgarden.co.uk**

TO ENTER Answer the following question:
What is the Cornish name for Cornwall?

BY POST Send your answer on a postcard, along with your name, address, postcode and contact details to: GARDENS ILLUSTRATED 182/Planthunters of Cornwall, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA.

ONLINE You can also enter at **www.gardensillustrated.com**

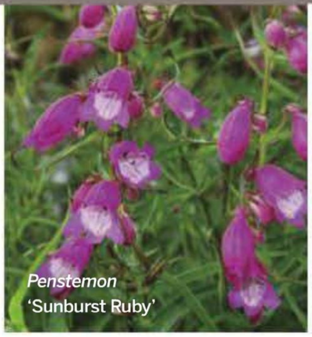
Closing date 29 February 2012. (Note: Please read full terms and conditions below. Prize does not include transport to or around Cornwall. Prize must be redeemed by 28 February 2013.)

TERMS & CONDITIONS **1** Promoter Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited. **2** You can enter the competition if you are a UK resident (including the Channel Islands), aged 18 and over, unless you are an Immediate Media employee or connected with the promotion. **3** By entering, you agree to be bound by all the rules of the promotion. **4** Only one entry per household allowed. **5** No responsibility accepted for lost, delayed, ineligible or fraudulent entries. **6** The closing date for the competition is 29 February 2012. **7** To enter, send the answer to the question on a postcard with your name, address, postcode and contact details to Gardens Illustrated 182/Planthunters of Cornwall, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA. Or enter online at www.gardensillustrated.com. **8** The winner will be the first correct answer drawn at random after the closing date. **9** The prize is a two-night stay for two at The Nare including bed, breakfast, afternoon tea and dinner, plus tours of Glendurgan and Trebah Gardens. **10** The prize is to be redeemed by 28 February 2013 (excluding all school holidays, bank holidays and Christmas). **11** The accommodation is subject to availability. **12** The accommodation is for two adults in a double or twin room. Any extras must be paid for. **13** Winners must arrange their own travel to and around Cornwall, and their own insurance. **14** The redemption of the Glendurgan prize is subject to availability. Glendurgan has the right to change the details of the guided tours depending on the time of year that the prize is redeemed. **15** The redemption of Trebah's prize is subject to availability. Trebah Garden has the right to change the details of the guided tours depending on the time of year that the prize is redeemed. **16** The redemption of the Trebah prize cannot be taken in August or December 2012. **17** There is no cash alternative and the prize is not transferable. **18** The decision as to the winner is final. **19** The winner will be notified within 30 days of the closing date. **20** For details of the winner, check www.gardensillustrated.com within two months of the closing date. If any winner is unable to be contacted within one month of the closing date, the promoter will offer the prize to a runner-up. **21** We reserve the right to amend, alter or withdraw the promotion at our discretion.

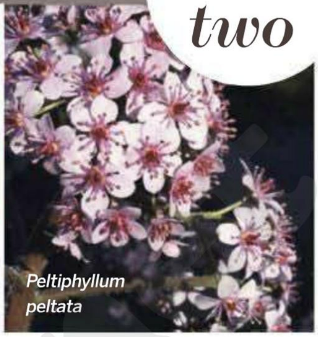
Plant World seeds give-away and discount

Offer two

Plant World Seeds in Devon sells more than 1,500 kinds of flower and vegetable seed, many rare and unusual, shipping to anywhere in the world. The new 2012 catalogue is out and to mark the imminent arrival of a new seed-sowing season, GARDENS ILLUSTRATED readers are being offered two free packets of seed. There's the long-flowering *Penstemon* 'Sunburst Ruby' and *Peltiphyllum peltata* (=*Darmera peltata*), known as the umbrella plant, which does well in damp soil. **To receive your free seeds** and a 2012 catalogue, send your address along with three first-class stamps to Gardens Illustrated Seeds, Plant World Gardens, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 4SE. **PLUS** you can gain a 20% discount on any order made via the website. Go to **www.plant-world-seeds.com** and make your selection. Include the discount code 'SAVE20GILL' when prompted. **Offer valid until 31 March 2012.**


Penstemon 'Sunburst Ruby'

Penstemon 'Sunburst Ruby' (rrp £2.55) This new, completely hardy, long-flowering perennial produces lots of white throated, bright red trumpets from early summer into late autumn. Prefers well-drained soils. H 30-45cm.


Peltiphyllum peltata

Peltiphyllum peltata (rrp £2.30) A superb plant that starts off with sprays of pink flowers in early spring before pushing up leaves rather like a gunnera but not as large or sprawly. Should be allowed to grow large. H 1m.

Offer three

10% off Beth Chatto's 'must-have' plants

COURTESY OF FRANCES LINCOLN *BETH CHATTO DAY IN THE LIFE* / RACHEL WARNE

We are delighted to feature Beth Chatto's list of 100 must-have plants (see pages 33-43). Beth Chatto (pictured left) is renowned for her belief in 'right plant, right place' following the extensive research her husband, the late Andrew Chatto, carried out into plant ecology. This means that each of the plants on her list has been chosen for its garden worthiness and appeal.

We hope you've been inspired by her selection. To tempt you further The Beth Chatto Gardens is offering a 10% discount on plant orders made from its nursery. The offer covers not only the plants on Beth's 100 must-have plants list, but any other plants you select.

HOW TO ORDER

Go to **www.bethchatto.co.uk** and select your plants from the nursery's plant list. When prompted use the code 'gardill100' to gain your discount. You can also place your order over the telephone. Call **01206 822007** and quote 'Gardens Illustrated' There is a minimum order of £20. P&P is charged at £7.50. **Offer ends 31 March 2012.** Only available to readers in the UK and Ireland.

Get your 2012 NGS *Yellow Book* for less

Offer four

gardens open for charity
THE YELLOW BOOK 2012
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Order *The Yellow Book 2012* at a special reader discount. Published each year, the guide book is the essential listing of gardens to visit throughout England and Wales, many of which are not normally open to the public. The gardens welcome visitors on behalf of the National Gardens Scheme (NGS) to help raise funds for charities such as Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie Cancer Care, Help the Hospices and Crossroads Care. The 2012 guide details more than 3,800 gardens, including 650 new ones. This year also marks the 85th anniversary of the NGS and to celebrate the guide includes more than 120 gardens that opened in that first year of 1927.

To buy your copy of *The Yellow Book 2012* at the offer price of £7 (rrp £9.99) including UK p&p go to **www.ngs.org.uk** and use the promotional code 'GIYB12' when prompted. **Offer valid until 31 July 2012.**

Sensational snowdrops

Explore the beauty of winter with these sensational snowdrop gardens.

1. ABBEYWOOD GARDEN AND CAFE

For the first time a chance to see the collection of Snowdrops in Jane's Garden and the beginning of our Snowdrop story at Abbeywood. See website or phone for details.

EMAIL **abbeywoodgardens@gmail.com** | TEL **01606 301374**
WEBSITE **www.abbeywoodgardenscheshire.co.uk**

2. WELFORD PARK

A privately owned Queen Anne home and working farm and has been in the same family since 1618. The seven acre beech wood is one of the largest carpets of snowdrops in the British Isles. The banks of the River Lambourn and the gardens have many more species of galanthus, together with aconites and winter flowering shrubs. The Old Laundry tea room serves homemade lunches and cream teas and there is a 'snowdrop' shop. Dogs on leads.

EMAIL **snowdrops@welfodpark.co.uk**
WEBSITE **www.welfordpark.co.uk**
TEL **01488 608691**

3. GREEN ISLAND GARDENS

Green Island Gardens is 20 acres of professionally designed gardens by the owner Fiona Edmond, featuring terrace gardens, mixed borders, Japanese garden, seaside garden, gravel gardens, water gardens and extensive woodland gardens carpeted in February by snowdrops and April with bluebells. It is a plantsman's paradise, a garden for all seasons, with a huge variety of unusual plants.

EMAIL **fionaeedmond7@aol.com**
WEBSITE **www.greenislandgardens.co.uk**
TEL **01206 230455**

1. IVYCROFT PLANTS

Visit Sue & Roger Norman's 4 acre rural Herefordshire garden to see their collection of snowdrops growing along with other winter beauties such as hamamellis, cornus, birches and willows. Snowdrops for sale. Ivington Green, Leominster HR6 0JN.
Open by appointment, please phone or email. Entry fee £3.50.

EMAIL **ivycroft@homecall.co.uk** | TEL **01568 720344**
WEBSITE **www.ivycroftgarden.co.uk**

5. THE GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

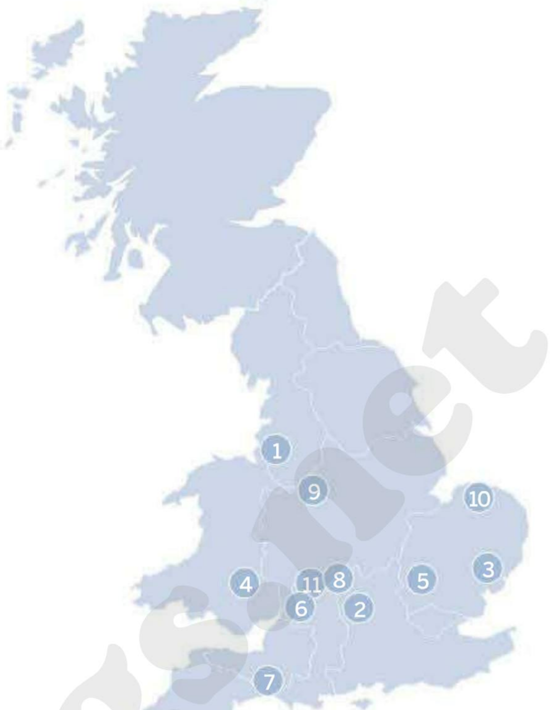
Enjoy the wonderful display of snowdrops in the woodland and Bosquet areas of these historic Essex gardens. Wander through the 23 acres, delight in the tranquillity and treat yourself with delicious homemade refreshments. Open Sunday 19th and 26th February from 12 noon – 4pm.

EMAIL **enquiries@eastonlodge.co.uk** | TEL **01371 876979**
WEBSITE **www.eastonlodge.co.uk**

6. TRENCH HILL GARDEN

Trench Hill garden covers between 2 to 3 acres, and is set on a hillside in a small woodland, with panoramic views to Painswick and beyond. The garden has evolved very spontaneously with no set plan or design from the outset; rather one change has sparked off a new idea or development. The garden tries both to blend in with the natural surroundings and to enhance them.

EMAIL **celia.hargrave@btconnect.com** | TEL **01452 814306**
WEBSITE **www.ngs.org.uk**



7. FORDE ABBEY

Snowdrops - Wordsworth's "venturous harbinger of spring" - will carpet Forde Abbey in February. Snowdrop Weekends run every Saturday & Sunday throughout the month, starting a season which continues with the Plant Fair on 4th March, at the beginning of Crocus Week. 30 acres of award-winning gardens open every day 10am-6.30pm (last admission 4.30pm). House opens 1st April. Tearoom, gift shop, plant nursery, pottery exhibition.

EMAIL **info@fordeabbey.co.uk**
WEBSITE **www.fordeabbey.co.uk**
TEL **01460 221290**

8. WATERPERRY GARDENS

For stunning snowdrops in their natural setting, visit Waterperry Gardens this February. Discover more than 30 different varieties in the ornamental gardens with free snowdrop tours on February 18th, 19th, 25th and 26th (garden entrance fee applies). Enjoy a bracing walk and warm up with our wonderful winter menu in the teashop. Inspirational gardens and plants, expert advice, sumptuous food and great ideas for the home and garden.

EMAIL **office@waterperrygardens.co.uk**
WEBSITE **www.waterperrygardens.co.uk**
TEL **01844 339226**

9. RODE HALL AND GARDENS

Many varieties of flowers, vegetables and fruit are grown in the walled kitchen garden, including world-record gooseberries. The large working garden reveals its full glory from the beginning of June. Much of the produce is sold fresh at Rode Hall's renowned farmers' market, or made into jams and chutneys to sell at the tearooms.

EMAIL **enquiries@rodehall.co.uk**
WEBSITE **www.rodehall.co.uk**
TEL **01270 873237**

10. WALSINGHAM ABBEY GROUNDS

Visit Walsingham Abbey for spectacular carpets of galanthus nivalis and aconites naturalised through almost 20 acres of woodland, surrounding the ruins of the medieval priory and place of pilgrimage. The Abbey Grounds are open daily from the start of the snowdrop season in early February.

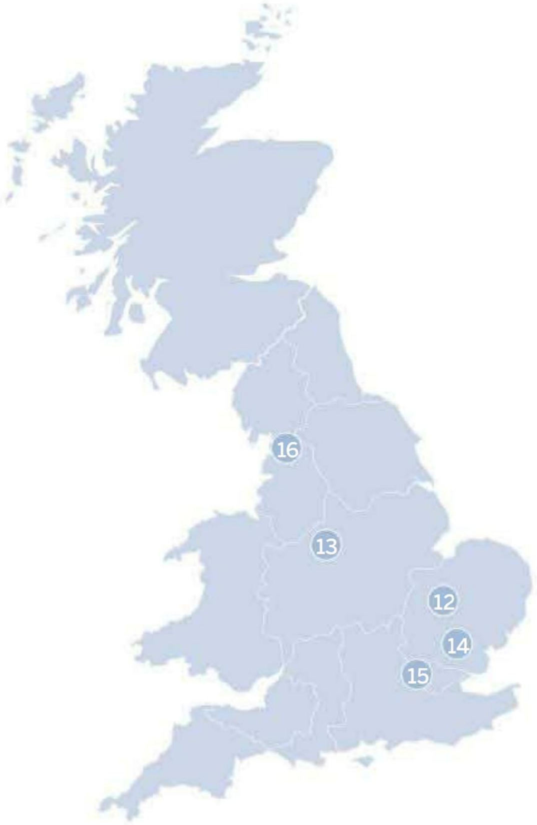
ADDRESS **Walsingham Abbey Grounds & Shirehall Museum, Common Place, Little Walsingham, Norfolk NR22 6BP**
TEL **01328 820259** | WEBSITE **www.walsinghamabbey.com**

11. COLESBOURNE PARK

Colesbourne Park, in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, is acclaimed to be one of the finest snowdrop gardens anywhere. Visitors can enjoy sweeps of snowdrops or study the collection of over 250 varieties, all set in beautiful grounds. The garden is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 1pm, 4th February to 4th March 2012.

EMAIL **info@colesbournegardens.org.uk**
WEBSITE **www.snowdrop.org.uk**
TEL **01242 870264**

worldmags.net



12. CHIPPENHAM PARK

Chippenham Park lies close to the border of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire just north of Newmarket.

The display of naturalised snowdrops is probably the finest in East Anglia.

The gardens will open to the public for weekends in February. Delicious home-made soups, bbq and other refreshments.

ADDRESS **Chippenham Park, Nr Newmarket, CB7 5PT**
WEBSITE **www.chippenhamparkgardens.info**

13. HOPTON HALL

The Snowdrop Gardens at Hopton Hall consist of five acres of woodland covered with snowdrops in a completely natural setting. Come and see the restoration work so far in this historic Derbyshire Garden. It is open every day from Wednesday 1st February – Sunday 4th March.

ADDRESS **Hopton, Derbyshire DE4 4DF**
TEL **01629 540923** WEBSITE **www.hoptonhall.co.uk**

14. MARKS HALL GARDENS AND ARBORETUM

At Marks Hall there is a very special area of woodland known as Robin's Grove, carpeted in snowdrops at this time of year. The main variety is the double snowdrop (Galanthus nivalis 'Flore Pleno'), single snowdrops are scattered around with Aconites and larger clumps of Galathus elwesii. The best approach is through the Millennium Walk with red stemmed dogwoods and Himalayan Birches for reflection in the nearby lake.

EMAIL **enquiries@markshall.org.uk** | TEL **01376 563796**
WEBSITE **www.markshall.org.uk**

15. CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN

Snowdrop Days Saturday 4 to Monday 13 February 2012.
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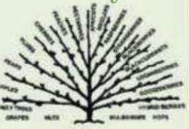

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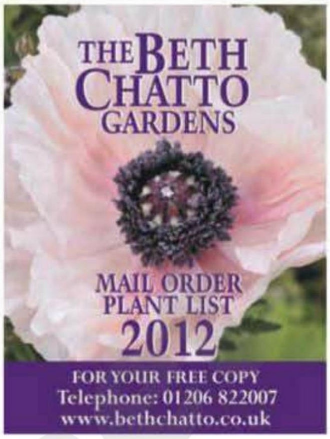

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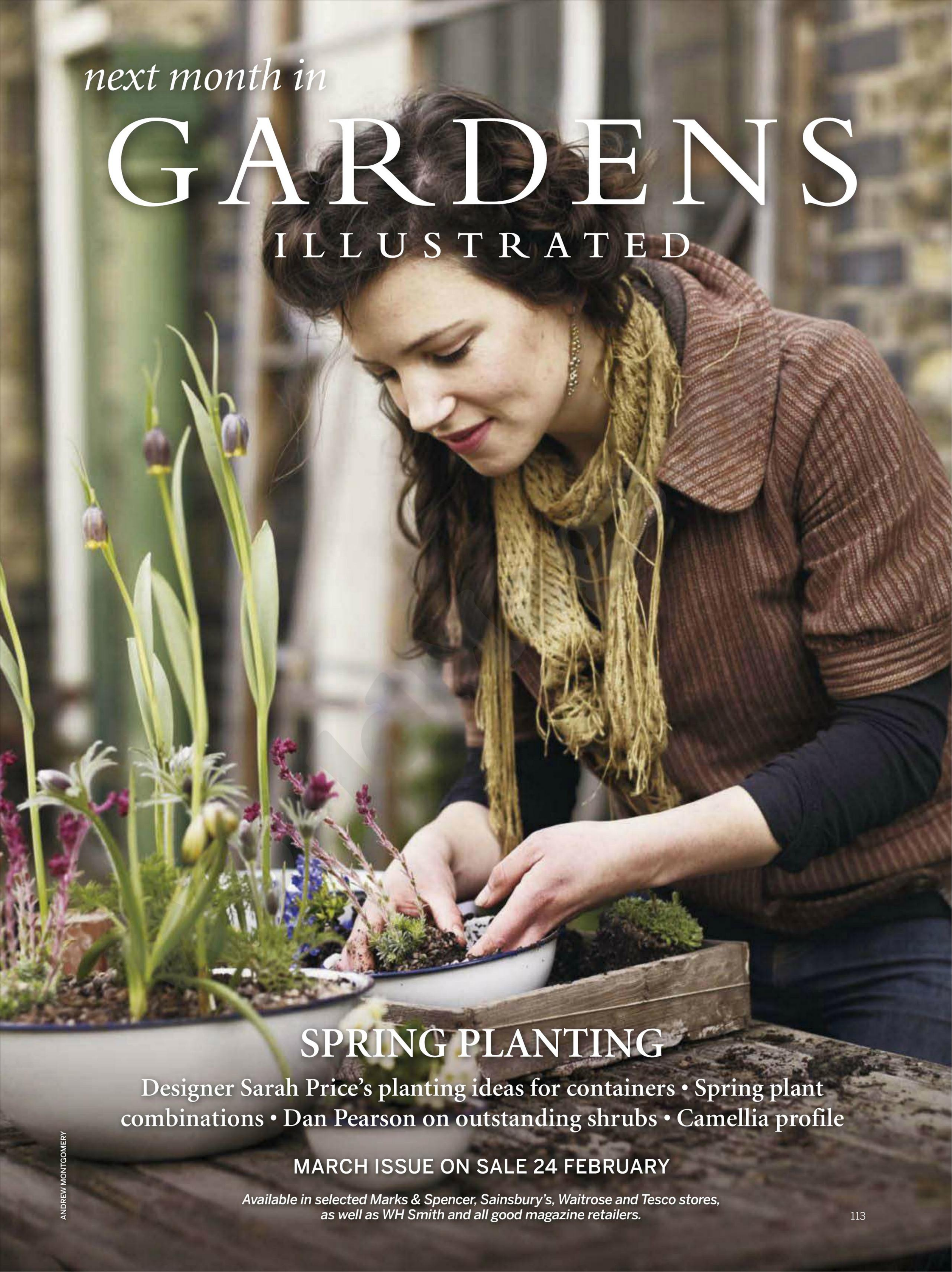

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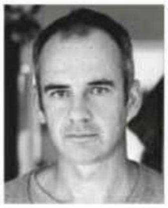
A drop of happiness

It's quantity not variety that matters when it comes to snowdrops

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **ANGELA HARDING**



Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire

Is it safe to talk about snowdrops yet? I've been putting it off for a while because in recent years the subject was tainted by the rise of the Galanthofreaks, but I seem to remember that there was a programme about them on Radio 4 last year, which is a sure sign of a fashion in decline. With any luck the Dropheads will soon have gone the way of the Hellebores and the Hostanerds before them, leaving the rest of us to enjoy normal snowdrop conversation along the lines of how nice they are and how jolly they look and no, we have no idea how many different kinds we own but probably not more than half a dozen that any rational human would remember one from the other.

The ordinary snowdrop, *Galanthus nivalis*, is already a perfect thing, and a blizzard of it is a staggering sight. There is a churchyard not far from here that is solid with them now and if you visit on a sunny day you get a blast of honeyish scent. I would rather have such a quantity than any number of varieties. With that in mind, we are building up the population here, all along the hedge bottoms and through the back of the borders.

Other snowdrops are worth having when the situation calls for them. Most obviously *G. ikariae*, which thrives in sun and is happy on the arid fringes of the border. Its most distinguishing feature is that the leaves are green rather than glaucous. *G.* 'Atkinsii' grows tall and will show itself among arums and hellebores. I am told that 'S. Arnott' is robust enough to do in a meadow, and keep meaning to entice it out of the bed to see if it is so. I used to love it more that I do now and a romp in the grass might be just the thing the relationship needs to be rekindled. For the same physical presence with a more refined strength of character, I prefer 'Washfield Colesbourne,' though you won't come across it as easily as Mr Arnott, and I wouldn't want to send anyone looking for it.

Because no snowdrop is so much better than any other that it is worth losing your sanity for. Yes, 'Hippolyta' is a lot nicer than the ordinary double, but you won't know that unless you grow the two together, so why torture yourself? 'Viridapice' is interesting, but you have to point it out to people who don't know already. Before you know it you are hunting down snowdrops that look ill and quite soon after that you begin to make smug references to 'the collection.'

Angela Harding

> *"The ordinary snowdrop is a perfect thing, and a blizzard of it is a staggering sight"*

I don't know what 'Trym' goes for now, but back in the day when you couldn't get it at all, some friends who had got a mild dose of the disease implored me to petition on their behalf another friend who had it. As the booty was dug out and handed over, by torchlight after dinner, as these affairs are conducted in the best circles, I was asked whether I didn't want a bulb for myself. I looked down at the outstretched palm and I remember thinking that the bulb itself had more appeal than the flower and, not being one to plant things upside-down, I declined.

The happy ending was that the recipients had a darling thing called 'Augustus' (ironically, a brother of 'Trym') which I admired and of which they gave me a bagful in their gratitude. It is fat and cheerful and prolific and is bulking up at a record rate, and has become the absolute favourite while it is in flower. Serendipity also brought 'Finale' to me. Aptly named (by Beth Chatto, I think), that is a delight that extends the season and heralds the end. It is nice to see a snowdrop holding its own among other flowers, and to be reminded of how blessed we were to have such objects of grace and delicacy in the first cracking of winter. ☐

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